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## STUDENT REPORT

GREAT WARRIORS OF  
THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR--  
ULYSSES S. GRANT & WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

MAJOR FAYE L. MARKS 84-1665

*"insights into tomorrow"*

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TITLE GREAT WARRIORS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR--  
ULYSSES S. GRANT - WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Major Marks began her study of American Civil War history as a result of genealogical research, which led to ancestors who served in both the American Civil War and the American Revolutionary War.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to review, analyze, and compare the military strategies of General Ulysses S. Grant and General William T. Sherman in the context of the ACSC Strategy Process Model to provide insight into the evolution of strategy and the actual process by which it is derived. This will be accomplished by describing the actions of General Grant and General Sherman principally during significant battles of the American Civil War in the western theater. In a brief background sketch of each general, there will be emphasis on early events that might have influenced strategy development. The final chapter will compare and contrast individual strategies in terms of the ACSC Strategy Process Model and will analyze the way in which General Sherman's strategy complemented that of General Grant to provide the ultimate strategy for winning the war. To this end, some of the parallel events of their lives and careers, and the impact of the close personal and professional relationship that developed during the Civil War will be examined.



### SETTING THE STAGE

Neither Grant nor Sherman was involved in the strategy-making process at the highest levels at the beginning of the war. It will be beneficial, then, to set the stage for their respective entries into the process by describing those decisions made by their superiors down to the level where Grant and Sherman begin to make their contributions.

To study the actions of both men in terms of the ACSC Strategy Process Model, one must first define the national objectives at the beginning of the war. This had been done by both the Union and the Confederacy. President Lincoln's primary objective was the restoration of the Union, "even if he had to resort to arms" (4:2). Lincoln wanted to overcome the Confederacy's ideas of secession and state's rights as quickly and painlessly as possible in order to minimize the bitterness that would have to be overcome during reconstruction (19:132). This implies that Lincoln's grand strategy was not dominated by the idea of military conquest, rather the opposite was true: military force would be used only as necessary to reenforce other means. Resolving the slavery issue was not initially an objective of the war, but rather a symptom of the economic problems which led to war. Only later did Lincoln capitalize on the emotional appeal of the slavery issue as a rallying point to help unify his divided Union. The Confederacy, on the other hand, held as its primary objective national independence by division of the Union. Whether economic or military, President Davis' strategy was to make the cost of holding onto the

Confederacy too high for the Union to endure. Neither side intended for military conquest to be the ultimate goal, and many economic measures were taken, especially by the North to cripple the South.

In April 1861 the North began to blockade the South's trade with Europe. Although not very successful early in the war, this eventually caused great damage to the South since it possessed so little manufacturing capability, possessed inferior transportation systems, and since it relied on Europe for certain manufactured goods, not the least of which was weapons. The South also lost most of its European market for raw goods such as cotton and tobacco. This coupled with the loss of the northern states as an avenue of trade was devastating to the South's economy over time. Blockade-running between the South and the British eased the immediate effect of the blockade somewhat so that the full effect was not felt until at least two years later (1:18). Although a certain amount of cotton trade with northern merchants continued, it was not generally sanctioned by the Union government. The failure of European countries to come to the aid of the Confederacy over the loss of trade further undermined the strategic planning of the Confederate government. Although Ordnance Chief, Brigadier General Josiah Gorgas brilliantly contributed to the South's war effort by establishing seven strategically located arsenals and related chemical and mining activities for supply of arms and ammunitions, the South never adequately produced or distributed food or clothes to supply the

troops (9:182-189). (General Joseph E. Johnston, CSA, argued after the war that the South failed to apply the correct economic strategy at the beginning of the war. He argued that if President Davis had sold five million available bales of cotton to Europe during the first twelve months of the blockade, the Confederate coffers would have been more than sufficient to finance the entire war (11:422).)

The North on the other hand was well into a period of industrialization which contributed to an economy that, carefully directed, was sufficient to finance the military effort required to restore the Union.

Because of the objectives selected, the North was forced to adopt an offensive posture. President Davis decided that the South would assume a defensive posture until either the North grew weary of the cost (in both men and money) of trying to hold onto the Confederacy or until sympathetic European governments came to the rescue, bringing about foreign recognition and possibly other options (4:2).

President Lincoln, no doubt influenced by his aging general in chief, Winfield Scott, determined that the Union's offensive strategy would be: to seize and occupy so-called strategic localities and areas, and to destroy the main Confederate armies which were defending these positions; to capture the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia; to divide the Confederacy by gaining control of the Mississippi River; and to damage principal grain-producing areas in the South which would further hamper the military effort (4:2). The plan was referred to as the "Anaconda

Plan" after the snake that kills its prey by slowly squeezing it.

The Union's strategy may not have crystallized at the outset of the war, but rather, developed in segments which are much easier to pick out in retrospect. It is necessary to remember that first, Lincoln, as Commander in Chief, was an amateur at preparing for any conflict as long, expensive, and manpower intensive as the Civil War. Second, many of his generals were also amateurs, as few were professional soldiers and most were political appointees. The generals who were regarded as competent military strategists, such as Generals Halleck and McClellan, and who were well versed in principles of war as espoused by Napoleon and interpreted by Baron de Jomini were not successful in adapting historical precepts to the actual situations they faced. Third, it is important to note that the people and the politicians of the Union were divided on their opinions of the Civil War: will there be war, of what duration, of what scope? Although the North pursued a strategy of offense, it was in the beginning, at best, a reluctant offensive by an undecided nation. The divided political factions were at odds with each other throughout the war. Political considerations were responsible for many military decisions, some of which were not in the best interest of the cause. Not until late 1864, when Union victory seemed likely, did the Union show signs of solid support. By that time the tables were turning, and the Confederate states were losing unity and the will to fight as the war looked more and more like a lost cause. In terms of the ACSC

Strategy Process Model, these were the early influences which continued to shape military strategy throughout the war. At the same time, it is fair to say that not a single general officer, North or South, could have visualized how technology would alter their thoughts on strategy and tactics. No war had been fought using railroads for supply movements; telegraph lines for communication; rifles which would make advancing in lines, shoulder-to-shoulder, obsolete; just to name a few revolutionary aspects provided by advanced technology. In many ways, each battle or troop movement was an experiment. Many of the general officers, on both sides of the war, were West Point graduates. Most had been influenced by Napoleonic doctrine, as interpreted by Baron de Jomini and taught by Professor Dennis Hart Mahan. The concept of large decisive battles against the enemy army was sometimes at odds with General Scott's idea of a slow siege that would affect the people, their resources, as well as their armies (19:82,93,134). Scott was a hero of the Mexican War of the 1840's and as the general in chief, was the most influential active duty general in the North. Many officers on both sides had served under him in Mexico, and it was during this war they received most of their collective combat experience.

It was in this setting that Generals Grant and Sherman entered the Civil War. Each entered as a colonel with West Point training and several years of active duty experience. Each began high enough in the military structure to command large numbers of troops, but not high enough to effect strategy directly, except at the tactics level. That opportunity came later for both, and

their approach would change and mature as they learned from mistakes--on the battlefield, in the political arena, and as a result of other influences.

## Chapter Two

### ULYSSES S. GRANT

#### EARLY LIFE

Hiram Ulysses Grant was born in Pleasant Point, Ohio on 27 April 1822. He was the eldest of five children born to Jesse Root Grant, a tanner and sometime political activist, and Hannah Simpson Grant. Jesse Grant has been described as "verbose, aggressive, and eccentric" while his wife, the antithesis, was noted to be "silent, pious, and shrinking" (13:1-2). There was little in his background to suggest that young Ulysses would achieve international acclaim or recognition. Ulysses was the target of neighboring children's cruel taunting, which, in turn, was a reflection of their parents' attitude toward Jesse's boastful, overbearing behavior. Ulysses' mother executed the mechanics of mothering very well but demonstrated an unnatural detachment and lack of display of affection for her son. In later years Hannah Grant never discussed her son's success, apparently with him or anyone else, and she never visited him in the White House during his eight years as President. Jesse Grant, on the other hand, was an opportunist who took full advantage of the success of any and all of his children, believing in their obligation to help support him when they were grown. Ulysses developed a quiet, at times introverted, and

serious personality. Many believe it was due to the fact that Ulysses never met his father's expectations. Mediocrity characterized his academic performance and indifference characterized his attitude. One biographer believed that Grant preferred mediocre accomplishments as they offered no reason for further ridicule (10:6).

Grant entered West Point in 1839 by means of an appointment obtained through his father's political connections. Grant did not indicate any talent for business, and he particularly disliked his father's tannery business. West Point and a military career seemed to Jesse to be the best alternative. Ulysses' work at the military academy also was characterized by mediocrity. He didn't apply himself to his studies, except in mathematics, but he managed to do comfortably well. He found the routine "wearisome and uninteresting" and kept hoping Congress would make good it's efforts to close the institution. (6:Vol I,39) Grant was too small and slender to distinguish himself in sports involving contests of physical strength, but he excelled in riding. Frequently during the Mexican and Civil War he capitalized on his excellent horsemanship during critical moments. Upon graduation, standing twenty-first in a class of thirty nine, Grant was assigned to the infantry rather than to his first choice, the cavalry. As an aside, it was upon entry to West Point that Grant's name was erroneously entered as "Ulysses Simpson Grant" by the Congressman who appointed him. (Simpson was the maiden name of Ulysses' mother.) Grant planned to take Ulysses as his



first name anyway, so he never corrected the record.

Two character traits stood out in Grant's early life that shaped all subsequent action and reaction. Grant was open and honest, so much so that he was teased or criticized as a child and often taken advantage of, especially in business, as an adult. He remained painfully sensitive to the reactions of others throughout his life. Also, there are several accounts in his early life of his dogged determination to finish a task once he began. He said he had a superstition about turning back once he started something (6:Vol 1,49-50). In the Civil War this quality served him well. He made five attempts to capture Vicksburg and demonstrated an exhausting persistence in following Lee from the Wilderness to Appomatox at the end of the war. A less determined or less patient man could not have been so resolute in his choice of strategy and might have chosen another means.

In August 1848 Grant married Julia Dent of St Louis, Missouri. The marriage proved to be the most stabilizing influence on the rest of his life. Julia was strong-willed and very devoted to her husband. Grant was very dependent on her and equally devoted. There was never a doubt to either of them, even in their darkest moments, that Ulysses would become successful. With few exceptions, Grant sent for his family as soon as he was settled in a new assignment. This was true even during the Civil War when Julia's camp following seemed necessary for Grant's welfare. Many observers claimed that family separations caused Grant to become despondent enough to drink excessively. His

drinking habits threatened to alter the course of his career at several crucial points, but only when Julia and the family were absent (13:27,59).

#### EARLY MILITARY CAREER

Grant's early career included participation in the war with Mexico under Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Grant included in his memoirs an extensive narrative of the war as he perceived it, including an analysis of the strategy. Grant's biographer, William S. McFeely claims, "Grant's account of the Mexican War is a classic in the history of war" (13:28). Grant drew his account largely from personal experience during major battles in the campaigns of General Taylor and General Scott. Grant believed the United States provoked the war and that it was an unfair and unnecessary invasion by a strong country against a weak one, intended in part as a political ploy to raise support for a larger professional army. He also believed that the war gained valuable land for the United States but that the military instrument was unnecessary when commercial means might have succeeded (13:30). He received two brevet promotions for gallantry in action while serving most of the war as regimental quartermaster and commissary officer. His experience in providing for troops proved valuable when planning his strategy during the Civil War (16:110). Also, his recognition of the military as an instrument of the political process set him apart from many Civil War generals who would use the military situation as a means of political or personal gain.

### YEARS AS A CIVILIAN

In 1854 Grant resigned from the Army after the commander of the fort heard rumors that Grant was drinking excessively. Rather than embarrass his family, he opted for resignation in lieu of court-martial. Apparently, there was some truth to the rumors of his drinking, but how much truth is unclear. The next seven years were dreary in terms of his livelihood. Grant had no head for business and poor judgment of character in business associates. Everything he tried, failed. In 1858 he pawned his watch to pay for his family's Christmas celebration. During the last winter before the Civil War he sold fire wood on the streets in St Louis. His attempts to farm family land failed, as did a partnership in real estate with a relative of Julia. He lived predominantly on the generosity of relatives. At the beginning of the war, Grant was working with his brothers in his father's tannery in Galena, Illinois. He was reduced to pursuing the career he thought he had avoided by going to West Point (13:58-66).

### GRANT'S RISE TO COMMAND

"The war's most interesting and most important military events are focused in Grant's development, his rise to power, and his success" (10:19).

Grant's attempts to return to the Army during the early days of the Civil War were as frustrating and disappointing as the previous seven years had been. He wrote to the War Department

asking for a colonelcy. This was common among West Point graduates who had left the service, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he never received a reply. Some believed the rumors of his drinking early in his career may have hurt his opportunities. However, historian Joseph B. Mitchell claimed the letter was misplaced and found at some later date (16:108). He didn't seem to know anyone who could help him; General Fremont turned him down, while General McClellan refused to see him. Eventually he became a clerk for the Illinois Adjutant General, mustering in volunteer troops. In June 1861 he became colonel of a volunteer regiment whose politically-appointed commander was dismissed for gross ineptness and whose troops were close to rebellion. Two months later, when President Lincoln selected additional brigadier generals for the Army's war effort, Congressman Washburn of Illinois nominated Grant as his only constituent meeting all the selection criteria. It was an undramatic beginning, but Grant seized the opportunity.

Grant's early war days were spent suppressing Confederate efforts to advance into the Mississippi area of Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee. He spent two months moving through Missouri supporting the Union's efforts to prevent the slaveholding state from seceding. Shortly afterward he was assigned to Cairo, Illinois. As soon as Grant arrived in Cairo his intelligence indicated that the Confederates intended to take by force the neutral state of Kentucky, beginning with Paducah at the mouth of the Tennessee River. Grant moved his troops immediately from Cairo toward Paducah. He did so without orders,

having notified his headquarters that if he heard no objections, he would proceed. There was no battle for Paducah. Grant moved his troops in and took control of the city. He was then ordered to Columbus, an important Confederate supply depot, which sat on

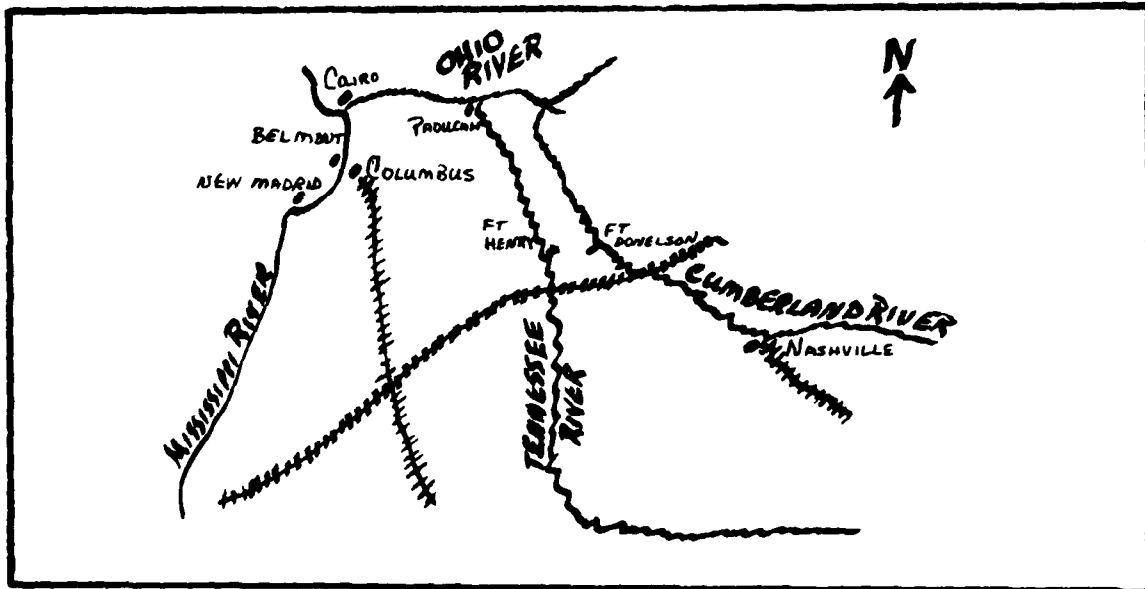


Figure 1. Battle of Belmont

a bluff south of Cairo. His subordinate, Colonel Oglesby was simultaneously ordered to New Madrid (Figure 1). When intelligence warned Grant that Oglesby would be cut off by Confederates at Belmont, Missouri, Grant moved with 3114 men on transports to a spot just north of Belmont. He left 250 men behind to guard the transports and advanced in two lines through forests and around ponds and swamps until his troops arrived in one continuous line outside the Confederate camp. The 2500 Confederates were driven out of camp toward the river. Grant's

men pillaged and set fire to the camp and celebrated their victory. Meanwhile, the Confederates regrouped and attempted to prevent General Grant's troops from returning to their transports. Grant's retreat was successful but disorderly, with Grant himself being the last man to board the transports (5:70-73). Grant's actions, however amateurish, very likely saved Colonel Oglesby's troops from capture and prevented the Confederates from organizing their offensive. The Battle of Belmont is regarded as Grant's first battle of the Civil War by some and as a raid by others. As a raid it was successful; as a battle, it was technically a defeat for Grant. Regardless of other assessments, Grant claimed Belmont as a victory because it slowed the Confederates' advance northward, and it boosted the sagging morale of the Union troops, who needed a victory to offset the effects of Confederate successes such as Bull Run. Grant learned several lessons at Belmont: namely, the value of reconnaissance (he could have anticipated reinforcements from nearby Columbus, across the river) and the value of a reserve force (to counter the Confederates' return).

Grant's next battles involved the capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson near the Kentucky border in Tennessee (Figure 2). These forts, in the middle of a line from Columbus and Bowling Green, Kentucky, were on the border of Confederate-occupied territory. The forts, twelve miles apart, were built by Confederate troops to protect vulnerable railroad bridges across the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, and to protect access to the rivers themselves. To capture either or both of the forts would

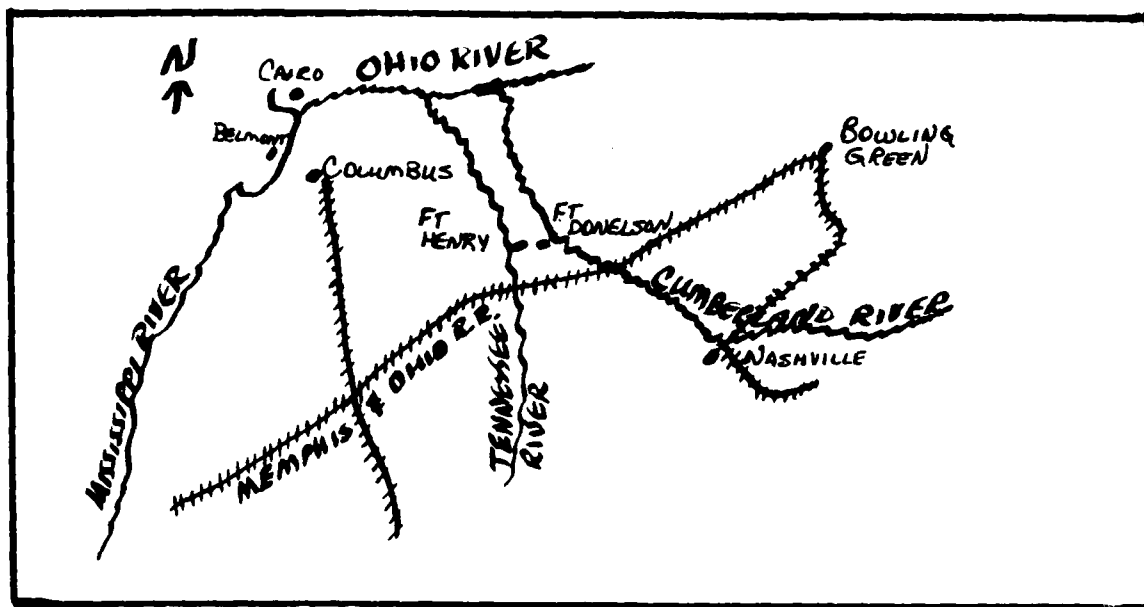


Figure 2. Capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson

cut the Confederates' line (the Memphis and Ohio Railroad) and force the withdrawal of troops in Bowling Green and possibly from Columbus (5:80). Grant was ordered to move from his headquarters in Cairo in late January 1862. Grant, commanding 15,000 troops, moved his men in two trips by transports under protection of ironclad gunboats. Landing south of Fort Henry, Grant intended to circle to the rear of the ten-acre fort, cut communications, and entrap the enemy before they could retreat to Fort Donelson. While this action was taking place, the seven gunboats at Grant's disposal fired on the front of the fort. The Confederate commander, Brigadier General Tilghman, realized quickly that he could not defend his position. The fort was built on swampy ground, the river was rising, and he had only seventeen guns and 3,000 men. Before Grant could complete his maneuvers, Tilghman

sent more than 2,500 men to Fort Donelson, and the less than 100 men who remained, including Tilghman, surrendered after two hours of battle on 6 February 1862. The sudden, unexpected Union victory startled the Confederate leaders such that Bowling Green was evacuated and a new position was taken up at Nashville, Tennessee, by about 14,000 troops, while the rest, 12,000, moved to reinforce Fort Donelson. Grant had to wait for the Navy to refit its boats, steam down the Tennessee River, and up the Cumberland River before he could attack Fort Donelson. Although he was very impatient to begin, he used the time to perform a careful reconnaissance of the area. His failure to do so at Belmont could have been a costly mistake, and he was determined not to repeat his carelessness. On 11 February General Grant began marching his troops overland while the Navy advanced up the Cumberland River toward Fort Donelson. Grant's commander, General Halleck, stationed in St Louis, rushed reinforcements to Grant's aid but offered no advice on the battle plan, according to Grant. He therefore decided to pursue a similar plan as had succeeded at Fort Henry. The battle, which began on the 13th, was not as simple as the capture of Fort Henry. Both sides had received additional troops although the Union remained numerically superior by two to one. Fort Donelson sat on a bluff, making it more easily defensible than Fort Henry which sat at water level. The high waters and bad roads of late winter made Grant's offensive nearly impossible. The fort was now under the command of Brigadier General Floyd. (General Tilghman had commanded both forts until his surrender.) Generals Pillow and



Buckner commanded additional troops in the immediate area, and General Forrest's cavalry was also nearby. Floyd's superior, General A. S. Johnston, feared the fall of Fort Donelson, and in anticipation ordered the garrison at Columbus to retreat, thereby moving the principal Confederate positions further south. Johnston also ordered Floyd to concentrate his defenses on the Cumberland River, in preparation for an attack by the Union gunboats similar to that at Fort Henry. Because of their position on a tall bluff overlooking the river, Floyd's troops succeeded in inflicting heavy damage on the gunboats. However, Grant along with Generals McClernand, Smith, and Wallace moved to encircle the 100-acre fort. With Smith on the left, McClernand on the right, and Wallace in the center, the Union cut off the fort's communications. At this point, Generals Floyd, Pillow, and Buckner attacked McClernand on the Union's right in an attempt to break through the line and retreat to Nashville. The Confederates succeeded, but Floyd was indecisive about the next move and unprepared to leave his logistics base at the fort. As a result, he lost the opportunity to retreat, and the Union began to close the line again. After consultation, Generals Floyd and Pillow managed to escape with their troops on some available steamers, leaving General Buckner and approximately 12,000 soldiers to surrender to Grant on 16 February. It was at Fort Donelson that Grant earned his nickname "Unconditional Surrender". In reply to General Buckner's request for terms of capitulation Grant replied, "No terms except unconditional and

immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." (Official Record, Vol. 7, p. 160).

The capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson had profound effects on both the North and South. The South was demoralized by the defeats: the battles showed up the lack of unified command and purpose in the area, as well as the inexperience of some of the leaders (Floyd) and ineptness of others (Pillow, and Floyd). The North was encouraged by the victories. They helped to offset failures in the eastern campaigns, to move the Confederates out of Kentucky and parts of Tennessee, and to give the Union control of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Grant was elevated to a figure of national acclaim.

Ironically, Grant was accused of drinking and neglect of duty after the capture of Fort Donelson and for approximately one month was relieved of command of the Army of Tennessee until General Halleck was confronted by President Lincoln to either bring formal charges or drop the matter. Halleck had no proof and dropped the matter. Shortly thereafter Grant was promoted to major general of volunteers at the recommendation of Halleck (5:94).

Grant's next series of battles were the darkest period in his Civil War career. Following the capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, General Halleck seems to have been bewildered by Grant's victory, and he floundered without a plan of action for ten days (5:92). Grant wanted to pursue the enemy, but Halleck refused to consider Grant's advice. (Halleck's jealousy toward Grant's rising popularity is well documented (5:94-95; 10:26).)

He also refused to send Grant into an area where he would fall under the command of another general (Buell). Grant's army, therefore, waited idly at Fort Donelson. Meanwhile, the Confederates evacuated Nashville to Buell's army, and began to concentrate at Corinth, Mississippi, an important railroad junction. After about three weeks of confusing plans and orders, the Union troops prepared to break up some of the railroads in the area. General Sherman was ordered from his headquarters to breakup railways around Iuka and Eastport. He failed in the operations primarily because of heavy spring rains and subsequent bad roads. He set up camp on Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River, as directed by General Smith, Grant's temporary replacement.

Grant later made his headquarters seven miles away at Savannah and began to concentrate his forces for an attack on Corinth (Figure 3). He reasoned that the Union must attack before the Confederates reunited their armies, separated by Grant and Buell, and attacked the Federal forces. In retrospect, Grant has been greatly criticized for his choice of Pittsburg Landing as a concentration point for his troops. His armies were surrounded on two sides by marshy wooded land that prevented escape and the rain-swollen Tennessee River at their back was almost impossible to ford. Furthermore, he was in enemy territory. The site had not been selected as a battlefield, but rather as a depot location in preparation for the march on Corinth. The fault of Grant's planning lay in his refusal to believe that his army could be attacked. In his daily

correspondence and later in his memoirs, he never acknowledged the possibility of an attack by the Confederates (5:95-96). Sherman's reconnaissance of the Corinth area underlined to Grant the strategic importance of the location. He reported that it was easily defensible by a small number of soldiers, yet had camping provisions for 100,000 men. The railroads were fully operational, unlike those of western and middle Tennessee which had been destroyed by departing Confederates or attacking Federals.

Indeed, the South was gathering troops from all over the Confederacy to concentrate at Corinth and to begin a new strategy. Up to this point, Confederate forces were too thinly scattered. President Davis gave up the idea of protecting both seaboard and inland frontiers, and resorted to protecting only strategic inland locations. Simultaneously, Davis had ordered a similar concentration in the East against McClellan's Army of the Potomac (9:156-157).

As indicated previously, there was a race between the Union and the Confederacy to concentrate troops, with the winner being able to attack the other side with considerable advantage. Grant and Buell were between Johnston and Beauregard, but Buell had not yet arrived from Nashville to join Grant's forces. The Confederates were ready about two weeks ahead of the Federal forces, and Johnston and Beauregard began to move against the forces at Pittsburg Landing on 5 April 1862. Grant however, had been ordered by Halleck to avoid initiating an engagement until joined by Buell's 37,000 men. Halleck wanted more activity

against communication lines while avoiding a direct confrontation. Halleck's instructions were very cautious, but he was removed from the situation while Grant sat in its midst and realized the need to act first. Grant, however, obeyed orders and continued training his soldiers for battle. Many were raw recruits. Sherman's 10,000 men had never seen battle, and only two regimental commanders had any military training (5:103).

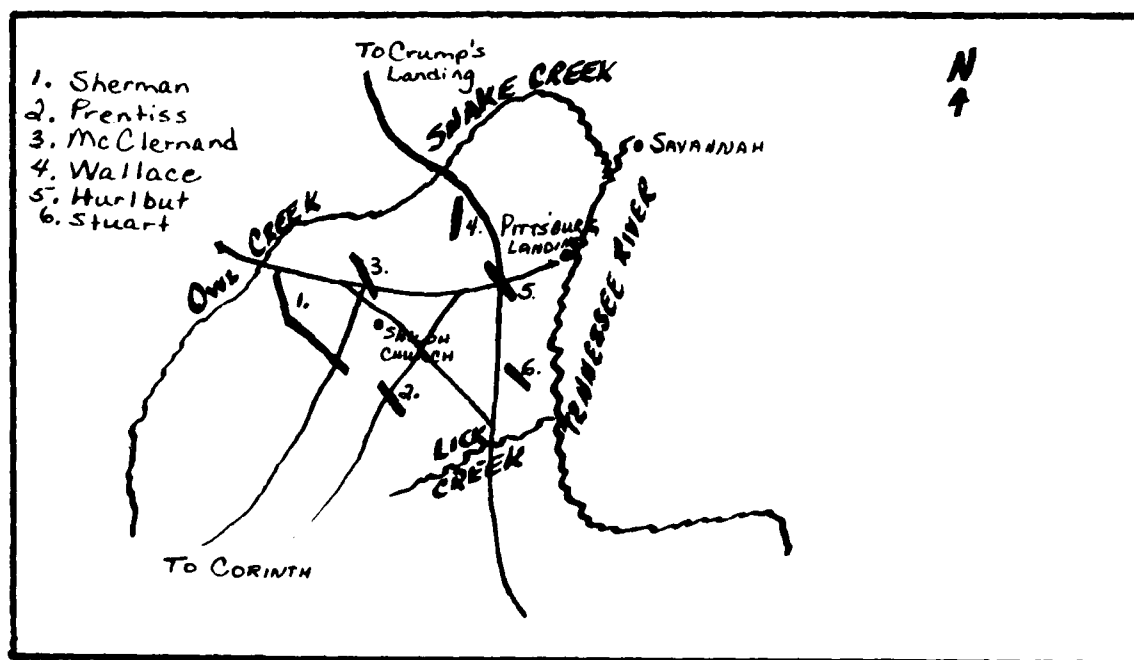


Figure 3. Shiloh Battlefield

The attack by the Confederates began at 0600, Sunday, 6 April. Sherman's division was positioned in front and to the right at Shiloh Church (Figure 3). General Prentiss was to the left with McClernand behind Sherman, Hurlbut behind Prentiss, and Wallace at the rear behind McClernand. The Confederates attacked

with three corps and a reserve division totalling just over 40,000 men. Grant commanded almost 45,000 men in five divisions. The Confederates moved in three lines of 10,000 each, preceded by skirmishers and backed up by 7,000 reserves. The lines ran from Lick Creek near the Tennessee River to Owl Creek on the Union's right. The attack came as a surprise. Sherman's words as he saw the skirmishers were: "My God! we are attacked" (5:105). Sherman and Prentiss were hardest hit in the early stages of battle. Sherman fell back to McClernand's right early in the day to avoid being flanked. Prentiss fell back soon after and fell back again between Hurlbut and Wallace. A separate brigade of Sherman's division under Colonel Stewart, which was located next to Lick Creek, fell back to Hurlbut's left (4:19). Grant was not present at the start of the attack, but was at his headquarters at Savannah. His absence perhaps was understandable at 0600, but what is not clear is whether he appointed a second in command. If he did not, as J.F.C. Fuller says is the case, this was a mistake he was repeating, as there was no one in charge during his absence when the Confederates attacked at Fort Donelson. (Grant was at his headquarters aboard one of the transports when the Confederates attacked.) McFeeley says that Grant left Sherman in charge during his overnight absences. When Grant arrived at the Shiloh battlefield he checked with each division commander and then, leaving each responsible for his own actions, began to organize resupply, catch deserters and form them into reserve units, and organize other support activities at the rear of the battle. (Deserters and newspaper reporters fled in large

numbers, spreading rumors that the situation was even worse than it actually was at the front.) He rode from division to division throughout the day directing activities as best he could. Without entrenchments, Union troops fell back until their site threatened to become a death trap. The Confederates held the advantage all day. However, at approximately 1430 General Johnston was killed in action, and at approximately 1445 Beauregard called off the attack. Although some attributed the halt to Johnston's death, Beauregard realized that his troops were nearly exhausted, that his reserves were spent, that there was some confusion of command lines, and that the reformed front line of Federal troops was holding stubbornly. Grant seized the initiative at that point, believing that the first of the two exhausted armies to gain the offensive would win. By morning, 7 April, Grant had 25,000 fresh well-disciplined men under Buell's command on his left, and his own divisions regrouped on the right. Beauregard's remaining 20,000 men with no fresh reserves began the twenty-mile retreat to Corinth. Grant pursued as far as Shiloh, his original front line, and stopped. He has been criticized extensively for his failure to pursue and defeat the enemy, but for all the explanations given, Grant simply had not organized the logistics necessary to support such a pursuit. The retreating army had the advantage of using or destroying forage and communications along the way, leaving the advancing army totally dependent upon a base of operations to feed and supply men and horses. Further, Grant had previously been ordered by

Halleck not to advance beyond Pea Ridge until ordered to do so (5:112).

Although Halleck was in overall command, he was still located in St Louis. Because Grant was at the scene of the battle, he received the brunt of criticism for the mistakes made in failing to prepare for the attack and a subsequent pursuit. J. F. C. Fuller praised Grant's leadership during the battle, claiming that he appropriately delegated authority to his division commanders and properly supported their activities throughout the sixth. In his memoirs, Grant answered the charge that he failed to entrench by saying that he believed his raw recruits needed to drill for battle more than they needed to entrench (6:Vol I, 357-58).

The press, the government, and the nation that had proclaimed Grant a hero after his victory at Fort Donelson now clamored for his removal. Halleck temporarily relieved the situation by riding to Pittsburg Landing at the head of a large number of reinforcements and personally taking command. Grant became second in command and as such was largely ignored.

Halleck began to combine all his forces and concentrate for his move on Corinth. By 1 May Halleck's forces totalled just over 104,000, while Beauregard's strength was up to 52,700. On 30 April Halleck began the twenty-mile march to Corinth, and, determined not to repeat Grant's mistake at Shiloh, he ordered entrenchments every mile. It took him one month to reach Corinth, a trip that took Beauregard three days on the retreat. By the time Halleck's forces arrived on 30 May, Beauregard had



evacuated the city taking everything of use or value with him. His evacuation of a major rail center, however, forced evacuation of other camps that would be cut off from support. Halleck set up his headquarters at Corinth and prepared for a campaign that would crush Confederate forces in the West (5:114). His objective was to control the Mississippi River and turn to march toward the Confederate capital of Richmond. He sent Buell to capture Chattanooga, then placed the bulk of his army in west Tennessee and Alabama to rebuild railroads, and prepared an early winter march to Mobile to wrest the important port from the Confederates. What he succeeded in doing was to spread his army too far to be effective and to make each segment vulnerable to Confederate attack. Grant, meanwhile, continued to be ignored by Halleck and badly assailed by the press, who now credited his victory at Donelson to luck and his near-defeat at Shiloh to lack of generalship (5:114-115). Grant was prepared to resign from the Army or request transfer, but he was convinced to stay by Brigadier General William Sherman. Sherman convinced Grant to stay until some "happy accident might restore him to favor and his true place." By leaving the Army, Sherman said Grant could never recover his dignity or position (6:Vol I, 385; 17:Vol I, 283). It worked; Grant stayed and was given permission to move his headquarters to Memphis, recently captured by the Union Navy. As a result of this incident, a warm, life-long friendship and successful professional relationship developed between Grant and Sherman.

The "happy accident" occurred sooner than expected when Halleck was called to Washington in June 1862 to become commander of the Union armies, replacing the popular, but to date, unsuccessful, Major General George McClellan. Curiously, Halleck, after recently combining all forces in the West under his leadership, by his own design, was not replaced by a single commander. The Union forces in the West again had a divided command and unfocused strategy. Grant retained command of the District of West Tennessee during this transition. Numerous battles were fought throughout the summer in the West. Grant defended Corinth and Buell defended Nashville in two of the most prominent battles.

By fall Grant was beginning to amass troops at Corinth for an advance on Vicksburg, Mississippi, the last important Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Capture of Vicksburg would allow Union forces north of the river town to join with those occupying New Orleans. It would deny the Confederates access to the river as a major means of supply and communication, and it would split their forces in two. Vicksburg sat on a tall bluff, naturally fortified on two other sides, and occupied or surrounded by large numbers of Confederate troops. Whoever controlled Vicksburg controlled that part of the Mississippi River, but its capture would be difficult and costly.

Grant's biographer, William McFeely, thought that Grant's actions were "lethargic" and "despirited" during the summer of 1862, although his troops were successful at Corinth and Iuka. McFeely believed that after the bad experience at Shiloh, it took

a rival to "wake him up and focus his attention clearly and relentlessly on a single goal: Vicksburg" (13:122). Major General John McClernand, Grant's subordinate in earlier battles, was the rival. A highly political self-assured man, McClernand convinced President Lincoln, an acquaintance from Illinois, that capturing Vicksburg was the key to controlling the Mississippi River, and that he was the man to realize one of Lincoln's principal objectives of the war. McClernand began to raise a new army in Illinois and surrounding states. The action was taken without Grant's knowledge, and when Grant learned of the plan indirectly, he was determined to get to Vicksburg first. Halleck gave Grant permission to fight the enemy when he pleased and assured Grant that the troops under him would not be transferred to McClernand. Nor was there any plan to give McClernand an independent command at Grant's expense.

Grant began the Vicksburg campaign with a hastily-planned strategy. There were five attempts beginning in December 1862. In general, his idea was that the navy would attack the front of the garrison while the army attacked the rear. The first defeat was at Chickasaw Bayou, northeast of Vicksburg (Figure 4). Sherman's 32,000 men arrived from Memphis as ordered, expecting to meet Grant. Meanwhile, the railroad north of Jackson, Tennessee was destroyed by Confederate cavalry and the Union supply depot which Grant established at Holly Springs was raided by General Van Dorn. With their communications cut, Grant's men retreated to Memphis. Sherman felt compelled to carry out the

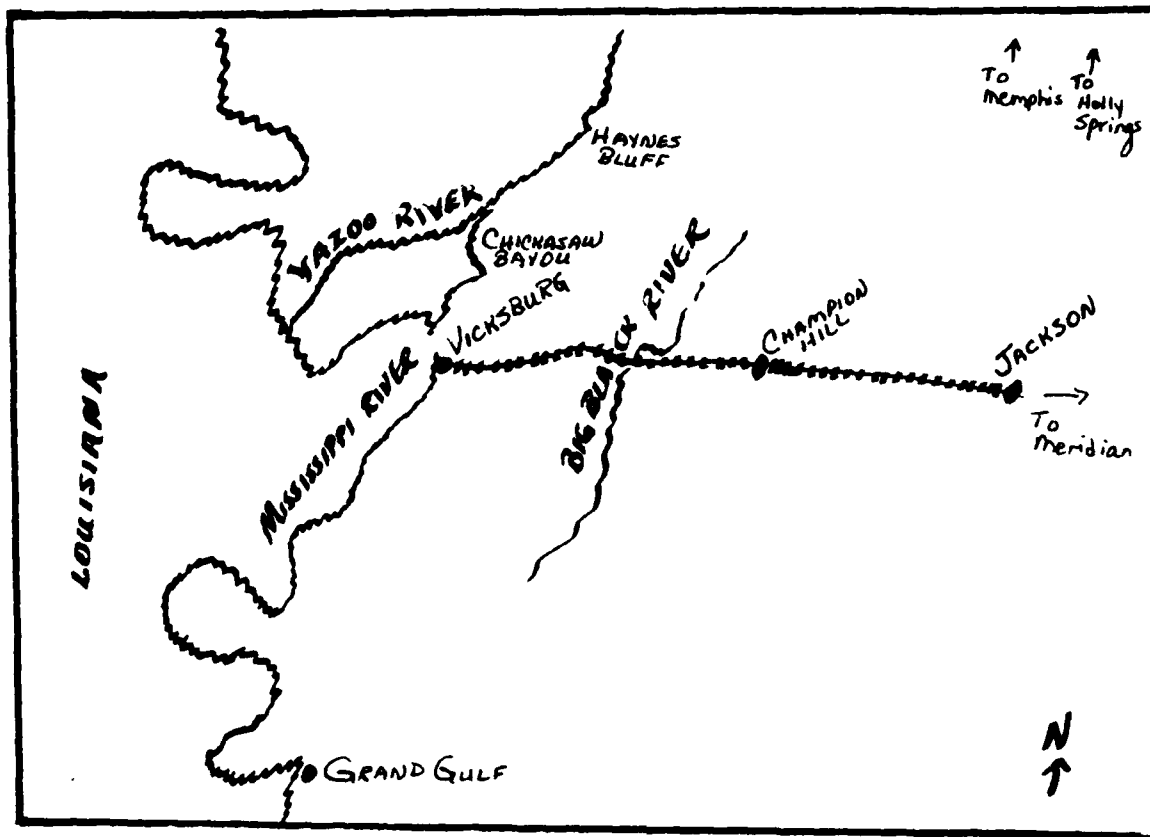


Figure 4. Siege of Vicksburg

attack as well as possible, for he "was more than convinced that heavy reenforcements were coming to Vicksburg..." (17:321). He lost over 1000 men fighting against an easily defensible, reinforceable, well-entrenched Confederate position. Grant learned from this experience never to allow the success of an operation to depend upon one fragile line of communications. Other similar attempts from the northeast and northwest were also unsuccessful. The winter of 1862-63 was one of the worst recorded in that part of the country. Heavy rainfall raised the water level to the extent that dry land large enough and close enough

to Vicksburg to accommodate large numbers of troops was difficult to find. Roads turned to mud under the feet of thousands of soldiers.

Following Sherman's defeat at Chickasaw Bayou, McClernand took command of Sherman's forces (a decision forced onto Halleck by Lincoln prior to the defeat), and was ordered to lead the river expedition of Grant's movement. "Van Dorn's raid, the Battle of Chickasaw Bluff, and above all, the appointment of McClernand to command the water expedition decided Grant to abandon his first plan" (5:131). He committed himself to advance along the Mississippi River. Here is an instance of political influence on his strategy. Grant believed that he could not fall back to regroup without appearing to his political enemies to be indecisive. He believed that he might be removed from command. Perhaps he was still smarting from the events at Shiloh. He adopted a plan suggested by his staff to move his men and supplies south of Vicksburg, set up operations, and prepare himself to move north toward the rear of Vicksburg. Or failing that, he would cooperate with Banks in New Orleans, as necessary. The heavy rains prohibited his move until spring. Sherman opposed the plan and argued to regroup at Memphis and attack from the North. Grant refused to fall back; he was already being criticized for slowness (5:131-137). In the spring, Grant's troops marched past Vicksburg on the west bank of the river in Arkansas and Louisiana. Nine miles south of Grand Gulf, he waited to cross the river. Meanwhile in a spectacular nighttime battle, the Navy's supply barges and gunboats ran past Vicksburg

with minimal losses. Grant established a base of operations at Grand Gulf, and took two very bold steps. He cut himself off from the supplies provided by the Navy, and then cut himself off from his commanding officer. He knew Halleck would disapprove the plan as being too unorthodox. Grant commandeered supplies from the Grand Gulf area and foraged for the rest. He ordered Sherman to move on Jackson, forty-five miles east to first, cut supplies to Vicksburg, and then defeat the Confederate army of General Joe Johnston before Johnston could attack the rear of Grant's army. While Sherman carried out the attack on Jackson, Grant met General Pemberton, commander at Vicksburg, outside the fort at Champion Hill. Pemberton had left the fort on Johnston's orders to unite forces for an attack on Grant. The Union movements prevented this and Pemberton was forced back to Vicksburg while Johnston moved north of Jackson. On 22 May 1863 Grant spent two hours trying to break down Pemberton's excellent entrenchments. After losing 3200 men and gaining nothing, Grant settled in to starve out the town and the fort. The siege ended on 4 July 1863 when Pemberton surrendered with almost 30,000 men.

The Confederate forces were cut in two, but the value of gaining control of the Mississippi River has been debated. Historians Hattaway and Archer most recently wrote that it was a psychological victory, little more. Union shipping never reached pre-war levels after the capture of Vicksburg. In part, the railroads had taken over much of the shipping business. Also, the Confederates continued to pose a threat to Union shippers at

selected points along the river. Although the Union claimed control, it required at least 15,000 men to defend nonmilitary commerce (9:421). However, critical points to the Confederates were under Union control, and Grant was able to join forces with Banks in New Orleans. Grant was able to have McClernand removed from command during the Vicksburg campaign, largely for ineptness and partly because Grant's position was secure.

After the capture of Vicksburg, Grant had suggested that Federal troops advance on Mobile, Alabama, and then turn to take Chattanooga. This action, along with a move through Georgia to destroy a main source of supply to the Confederates in Virginia, would have confined the war to the Carolinas and part of Georgia, and possibly would have ended the war sooner (5:158). Halleck denied permission for such action at Lincoln's insistence. Lincoln wanted the option of moving troops into Texas because of French involvement in Mexico. Instead, Grant's veteran army was dispersed in late 1863 to support other campaigns.

In late 1863 Grant was ordered to report to Chattanooga to save the Union forces from being surrounded and starved into surrender. For months before, first Buell and then his successor, Rosencrans, had been trying to take Chattanooga. In September 1863 Rosencrans took possession of the city after his advances convinced the Confederates under Bragg to retreat from the area. Rosencrans was confident that the Confederates would continue their retreat and left Chattanooga in pursuit. Bragg, however, turned his army at Chickamauga and forced Rosencrans to fight one

of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Rosencrans retreated to Chattanooga and became a prisoner in the city he was sent to capture (5:160). Upon his arrival, Grant was placed in command of the reactivated Military Division of the Mississippi. His command included all troops but those under Banks in New Orleans. Grant's first actions were to replace Rosencrans with Thomas and to send for Sherman at Corinth. Grant's next move was to establish a supply line to the starving city. Only a circuitous mountain road on the north side of the Tennessee River allowed access to the Union camp (Figure 5). The Confederates controlled

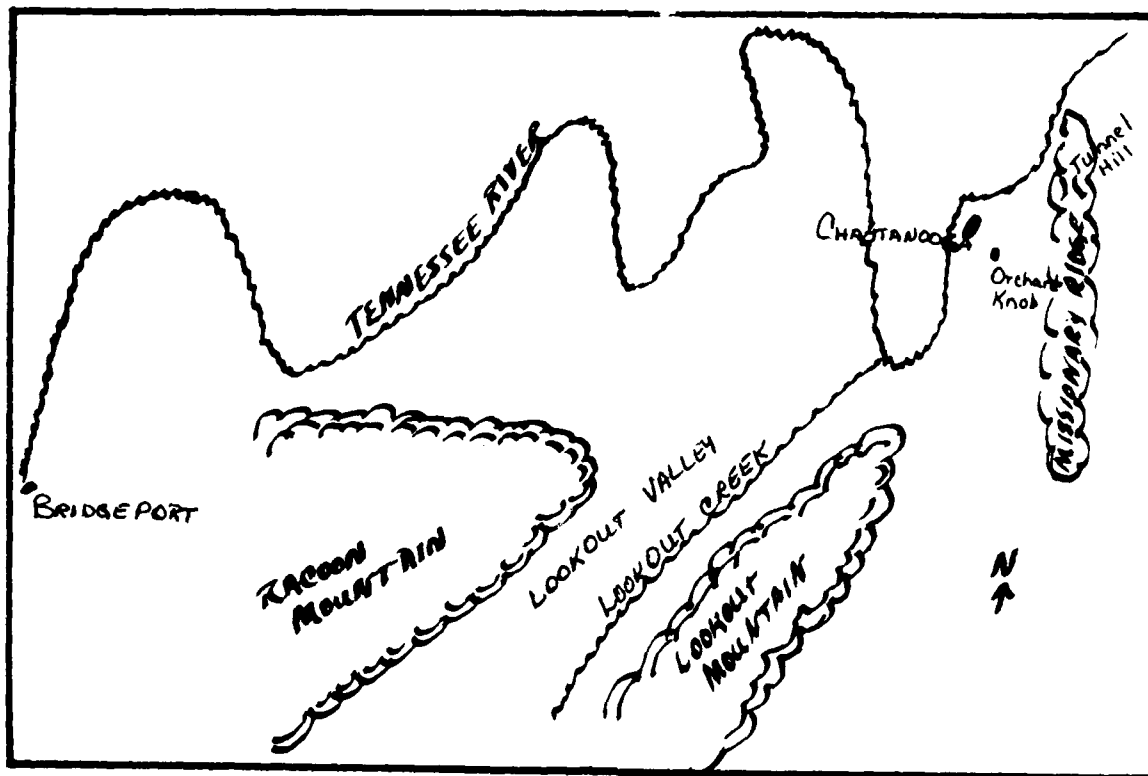


Figure 5. Chattanooga Battle Area



access to the river by encamping on Lookout Mountain and Racoon Mountain overlooking the river. They also controlled the railway between Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, as well as Missionary Ridge. On 27 October 1863 Grant's men left Chattanooga by the river with 52 carefully guarded boats. They moved past Confederate lines in the middle of the night and overcame Confederate pickets to secure a position on the south side of the river, west of Chattanooga. By afternoon of the next day a second more direct wagon road was opened to Bridgeport, Alabama, the town from which Federal forces at Chattanooga were being supplied. The Federals began using portions of the river for a supply route. The starving troops and animals were receiving full rations five days after Grant arrived. Although this plan was developed by Rosencrans and another Union general, Grant had the initiative to act swiftly to carry it out.

Grant now controlled Lookout Valley, but he knew Bragg was watching every move in Chattanooga from his vantage points on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Grant had kept his forces from starving, but "to restore the army's mobility was another matter" (3:57). Horses and mules that had starved or were too weak to work had to be replaced. Railroad lines had to be reconstructed. Grant also had to consider that General Burnside's army, originally trying to assist in the capture of Chattanooga, was also under siege at Knoxville. Their rations were low, and the Confederates were threatening to attack. Grant decided to use Thomas' troops to draw fire from Burnside. At the same time, he would attempt to cut the railroad at Dalton,

Georgia and deprive Bragg's army of its supply source (3:59). Thomas was ordered to attack Missionary Ridge as a means of leaving Chattanooga. But the siege had taken its toll. With very few work animals left, Thomas could move just one piece of artillery out of six. Only his infantry could move, but they would be required to carry all rations on their back. It was more than they could manage, so Grant delayed the move until Sherman arrived. Sherman arrived with 17,000 well-fed, well-equipped men, which he concentrated at Bridgeport, and he reported to Grant on 15 November 1863. Grant, Sherman, and Thomas developed a modified plan. Sherman would fake an attack on Bragg's left near Lookout Valley with a portion of his men. The rest of Sherman's men and Thomas' army would attack the north and lower end of Missionary Ridge respectively. Sherman would loan Thomas horses and mules to move artillery. Heavy rains and Thomas' characteristic slowness to prepare delayed the attack until 23 November. In the event this delay allowed enough time for Bragg to realize the plan and retreat, Grant ordered his troops at Bridgeport to attack Lookout Mountain and move on to the southern end of Missionary Ridge. Civil War historian Bruce Catton described the battle that followed as spectacular, in the sense that the topography allowed everyone to see all of what was going on. "Each soldier was a participant and a spectator at the same time" (3:71). On the twenty-third, Thomas advanced three divisions to a chain of low hills around Orchard Knob and overcame Confederate skirmishers. He drove them back to rifle

pits at the foot of Missionary Ridge. Thomas entrenched his men and waited for the next day's battle. Sherman at the same time placed three divisions just across the northern, or upper end of Missionary Ridge. It was time-consuming for Sherman to move so many men by pontoon boats across the Tennessee River, and by noon, General Hooker, from Bridgeport, advanced across Lookout Creek without waiting for Sherman's battle to start. Hooker inched the Confederates back from the western slope of Lookout Mountain. They fought in a heavy fog until a brief glimpse of afternoon sun revealed how badly outnumbered the Confederates were. Their line began to give way. By morning the Confederate troops had abandoned Lookout Mountain for Missionary Ridge, as Grant had predicted. Meanwhile, Sherman thought he was in position to capture a railroad tunnel on the upper end of Missionary Ridge. Instead, he had mistakenly positioned himself on a detached hill, and he failed to achieve the primary objective of his attack on 25 November. Grant assumed Bragg would reinforce against Sherman's threat, and he ordered Thomas to attack Bragg's center. The men first captured the rifle pits at the foot of the ridge. Then, without regrouping for an orderly advance up the ridge, and because of their vulnerability in the pits, the men charged the 500-foot slope. Bragg's men were surprised and thrown into confusion. Lines were broken, and equipment was abandoned as the troops retreated toward Dalton, Georgia. Grant began but discontinued his pursuit of Bragg. Reinforcing Burnside at Knoxville was first priority. Sherman was sent to rescue Burnside, but the Confederates had already

fled after hearing of Bragg's defeat (3:72-90).

Grant proposed leaving part of his army in Chattanooga in winter quarters to prepare for a march on Atlanta in the spring. The remainder would organize a campaign against Mobile, the target Grant proposed after Vicksburg (3:94). Grant's strategy now was to secure the territory from Chattanooga to Mobile. He would force the Confederates to evacuate East Tennessee, and move the line of operation farther east. He intended to destroy the railway center at Meridian, Mississippi to prevent Confederates from drawing support from Mississippi (5:178-179). Sherman completed his raid on Meridian on 14 February 1864 and delayed Confederate activity in the area for months. Before the rest of the plan could be implemented, Grant was called to Washington.

#### GRANT IN COMMAND

Early in 1864, Congress had revived the rank of Lieutenant General, and Grant was promoted to that rank on 9 March 1864. If Grant rose in favor after Vicksburg, his position after Chattanooga was solidified. He was now placed in charge of all Union armies and tasked to defeat Lee's army in the East. When Grant had been placed in charge of the Mississippi Division, he had expanded his perspective of strategic planning to include three armies instead of one. Now he had to expand his thinking again to include all the Union forces. He had approximately eight weeks to study the military and political situation. The normal planning time provided by the winter lull in fighting was past, and he had to move. Once again he faced a difficult

situation. He was known mostly by reputation to politicians and military men in the East. Now he was stepping in to face an opponent (Lee) who had overcome the efforts of the Union's best generals (5:209). Although Grant did not function in the political arena, he always seemed to be aware of the political realities during the war. At this point in 1864, Grant realized that two years of failure to defeat Lee had encouraged the Union's peace party to press for peace at any cost. Grant knew he had to move quickly. Lincoln appreciated that Grant understood the sense of urgency. Not only did Lincoln believe his chances of reelection were dwindling, but that the Union could be forced to separate from the Confederacy. He also knew he had not always made the best decisions for his military leaders to act on, so Grant was allowed to take charge with Lincoln's full support (2:6).

Grant reversed the strategy used against Lee, i.e., he would force Lee to defend himself and his capital, rather than defending Washington from Lee (5:209). He would confine Lee's actions by using the Army of the Potomac and move against the rear of Lee's army with the Union forces in the West. He would aim at the morale and resources of the enemy as well as the enemy's army. Grant moved Sherman up to command the Department of the Mississippi. He retained Halleck as an advisor to the President and overseer of administrative matters. This left Grant free to return to the field and avoid running the war from Washington. He reduced his subordinate commands until he had

three armies, the Potomac under Meade, the Mississippi under Sherman, and the James under Butler, plus a smaller protective force, the Department of West Virginia, under Sigel. Grant's strategy was matured and refined, he was confident, and for the first time, Union forces moved in concert. He accompanied Meade's forces into the field on 3 May 1864 (Figure 6). Grant's well-fed, well-equipped army was twice the size of Lee's. Lee's 62,000 men were "in rags and half-starved," although morale was high (2:7). From then until the following April, Grant would confront Lee in the Wilderness, at Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor. Each time there were similar circumstances--Lee had the advantage of interior lines, and was always well entrenched, waiting for

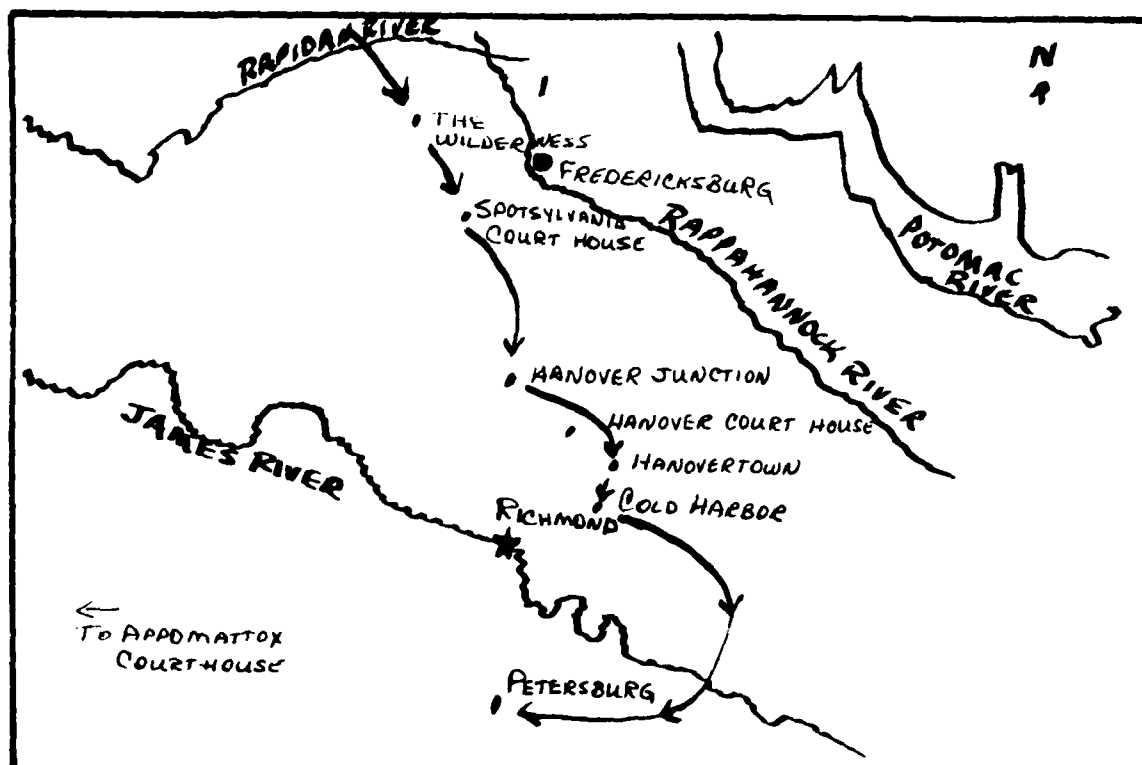


Figure 6. Grant's Eastern Campaign

Grant when Grant arrived. Losses were heavy on both sides, especially in Grant's army. Grant believed he could replace his losses easier than Lee and that he could wear Lee down until the fighting would be over. Grant would back off at Hanover Junction, where Lee's entrenched position was too formidable for Grant to assault. Lee's last attack was at Cold Harbor. His strength was ebbing. Grant focused on Petersburg, again approaching his enemy from the rear as at Vicksburg. Lee's entrenchments were too strong to warrant an attack and, also like Vicksburg, Grant began a siege of Petersburg that would last from June 1864 until March 1865. Lee would make one final feeble attempt to break out, evacuating Petersburg and heading west in hopes of joining with General Joe Johnston's army. With Sherman moving up through the Carolinas at Lee's rear and Sheridan cutting supply routes into the Shenandoah Valley en route to confronting Lee, Lee was cornered and surrendered on 9 April 1865 at Appomatox Court House in Virginia (2:10-69, 169-197).

Grant served two terms as U.S. President after the war. His terms were marred by corruption and bitter reconstruction, and he continued making bad personal business investments. During his final illness, he completed his memoirs--the only means of making his family financially independent after his death. Despite failings in his later life that rivaled some of his early disappointments, he remained loved and respected by his countrymen until his death in 1885.

### SUMMARY

Grant and Lee were worthy opponents. If Lee had been adequately supplied and supported by his government, the tables might have been turned. Lee doesn't appear to have made any serious mistakes that Grant could take advantage of. Rather, Grant knew he had overwhelming superiority of resources, and refused to back away or be intimidated by Lee's excellent generalship. Once again, Grant's superstition about finishing what he had started served him well. His tenacity paid off.

Grant was forty-three when the war was over. In three years he had overcome forty years of failure and frustration to become the most celebrated military leader since Washington, and one of the greatest in American history. He used the military instrument to restore the Union; thereby achieving the national objective.



KEY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF  
ULYSSES S. GRANT

- 27 Apr 1822 Birth of Hiram Ulysses Grant, eldest of five children, to Jesse Root and Hannah Simpson Grant at Point Pleasant, Clermont County, Ohio.
- 1839-1843 Grant attends West Point Military Academy. Graduates twenty-first of 39 and is commissioned to infantry.
- 22 Aug 1848 Marriage to Julia Dent of St Louis, Missouri.
- 31 Jul 1854 Grant resigns from U.S. Army.
- Dec 1860 South Carolina secedes from Union.
- 12 Apr 1861 Union surrenders Fort Sumter to the Confederacy. (Beginning of American Civil War.)
- Jun 1861 Grant receives colonelcy of Twenty-first Illinois Regiment.
- 7 Aug 1861 Grant is promoted to Brigadier General, effective 17 May 1861.
- 16 Feb 1862 Unconditional surrender of Fort Donelson on Tennessee River to General Grant.
- Mar 1862 Promoted to major general of volunteers.
- 6-7 Apr 1862 Battle of Shiloh. Grant subsequently replaced for derilection of duty. Grant plans to resign.
- 4 Jul 1863 Grant captures Vicksburg.
- 9 Mar 1864 Grant promoted to lieutenant general and placed in command of all Union armies.
- 9 Apr 1865 Surrender of General Lee at Appomattox Court House.
- 1866 Grant is promoted to General and placed in command of all U.S. Armies.
- 1869-1877 Grant serves as President of the United States.
- 23 Jul 1885 Death of Ulysses S. Grant of throat cancer.

## Chapter Three

### WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

#### EARLY LIFE

Tecumseh Sherman was born 8 February 1820, the sixth of eleven children born to Judge Charles Robert and Mary Hoyt Sherman of Lancaster, Ohio. Tecumseh, or Cump, as he was nicknamed, was descended from a distinguished family of Puritans who arrived in the new world during the 1630s. An ancestor, Roger Sherman, signed the Declaration of Independence. Both Sherman's father and grandfather were judges, and eventually Sherman's younger brother, John served many years in the U.S. Senate. When Sherman was nine, his father suddenly became ill and died, shortly after being appointed a justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio. Judge Sherman had begun an influential and successful career, but he had not accumulated enough money for his widow and children to continue without him. A close friend, Thomas Ewing, raised money to support the widow and three youngest children. The rest were sent to live with relatives or friends. Ewing himself took in Cump and raised him as one of his own children. With Mrs Sherman's permission, Mrs Ewing arranged for Tecumseh to be baptized. Although Sherman had been named for a great Indian chief, the priest refused to baptize him without a Christian given name. Since the day of the baptism was Saint William's Day, Cump became William Tecumseh Sherman (14:20).

Young Sherman remained in Lancaster where he continued his schooling as before and, as Sherman acknowledged in his memoirs, "Honorable Thomas Ewing...ever after treated me as his own son" (17:14). When Sherman was sixteen, Ewing, by then a U.S. Senator, arranged an appointment for him to West Point. The Academy enjoyed an excellent reputation at this time, with emphasis on math and science. Although the routine was rigorous, Sherman managed to do well in his studies, especially in mathematics and French. Sherman's energy and independence often resulted in mischievous pranks, which in turn resulted in large numbers of demerits. Two hundred demerits in a year were grounds for expulsion. Sherman averaged 150 demerits each year which reduced his final class standing from third to sixth. Of the 115 plebes in Sherman's class, only forty-three were left to graduate on 1 July 1840. Sherman was commissioned into the Artillery Corps upon graduation.

#### EARLY MILITARY CAREER

Sherman's early career was somewhat uneventful. His first assignment was to Fort Pierce, Florida, where he participated in rounding up Seminole Indians who had been skirmishing with the soldiers since 1835. In his memoirs and in a letter to his brother, Sherman commented on the ineffective strategy applied to the situation. He believed the U.S. government should either provide sufficient manpower and resources to control or remove the Indians, or let them remain undisturbed. He believed the Indians thrived there with good hunting, fishing, and farming

available. The white man on the other hand, did not seem interested in settling the territory (17:13-14).

Sherman left Florida in March 1842 for Fort Morgan near Mobile Bay, Alabama. His stay there was brief, and in June 1842 he was transferred to Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. In both cases, Sherman and all the officers were well accepted by the town's people and included in many social functions. As a result, Sherman understood a lot about the Southern people and the issues that led to the Civil War, from their perspective.

Sherman applied for combat duty at the outbreak of the Mexican War, but instead he was assigned first, to recruiting duty in Pittsburgh, and then, to duty in California where the U.S. claimed land belonging to Mexico. He never saw combat, but he was in San Francisco in 1848 when the first gold discovery was reported to his commanding officer. Sherman was disappointed and frustrated with his army career; he saw contemporaries becoming war heroes and others becoming wealthy during the Gold Rush. He did neither. At his request, he was made a commissary officer, which included a promotion to captain. Despite his meager salary, he married his childhood friend, his benefactor's daughter, Eleanor Ewing, 1 May 1850. The President and his cabinet members attended the wedding in Blair House in Washington City. This is indicative of the level of political influence which Thomas Ewing's family enjoyed, and which was available to Sherman had he chosen to take advantage of it. On 6 September 1853, at his family's urging and in his frustration, Sherman

resigned from the Army.

#### YEARS AS A CIVILIAN

Until 1861 Sherman worked at several careers with modest success. He worked for a prestigious banking firm, managing their San Francisco and New York offices, in turn. A panic in 1855 and again in 1857 ruined the firm, but Sherman's expert management kept losses from being worse than they were. His honesty and loyalty compelled him to cover the losses of friends who had invested in his firm. It took most of his savings and real estate to cover the losses. His health suffered during this period. Severe asthma attacks were almost incapacitating, and they depressed his spirits further. Without the benefit of a law degree, Sherman next passed the bar examination in Kansas and practiced law with one of the Ewing brothers. He wasn't happy in the position, and his wife disliked the Kansas plains. In 1859 he accepted an appointment as the superintendent of a newly formed military academy, the Louisiana Seminary of Learning and Military Academy (later Louisiana State University). He spent two years adjusting the curriculum, building facilities, and developing a fine reputation for the school. He was well liked by the local people and by the state board which was in charge of the school. The students found him strict, but fair, very likeable, with an abundance of old army and West Point stories to tell. He was quite content in this position. He built a new house and sent for his family. Before his family could join him, however, Louisiana seceded from the Union to join the

Confederacy. His school became an arsenal for confiscated Federal military goods and equipment. To stay would imply Sherman's support of the action, so he left promptly with the regret and good wishes of his friends and employers. In fact, the Governor of Louisiana begged him to stay, knowing his services would be put to good use and appreciated. As much as he liked the South, he believed his first duty was to uphold the provisions of the Constitution. He believed the obligation to law and order overrode all other considerations (17:184). Until he returned to the Army, Sherman chose a modest position as an executive of a horsedrawn railway company in St Louis. The job was closer to his Ohio home, and the position seemed secure. Although Sherman had never failed at any of his career attempts, he also had not succeeded in drawing large salaries or setting aside savings. His family eventually totalled six children, and his wife never yielded the privileged life style of her father's family. Money was always a problem, and the Ewings continuously pressured Sherman to return to Ohio and enter a family-supported lucrative occupation. Sherman refused, and was determined to make his own way.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Sherman refused to be involved. He predicted the war between the industrial North and the agricultural South would be long and costly. After years of living in the South, he realized the depths of the feelings there. He knew that the people, as well as the state governments, generally supported the cause. He was most concerned

about the approach of the Federal government--a quick repulsion of an unorganized rebellion. Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for 90 days. Sherman knew the effort wasn't adequate for the task. He believed the early war efforts would fail, dooming those in charge to failure as well (18:111). He wanted no part of it, so he bided his time. He received unsolicited offers, many as a result of the influence of his father-in-law or his brother. He even received an offer that would lead to being the Assistant Secretary of War, but he politely declined (18:109). Eventually his reserve coupled with many years of living in the South raised doubts as to his loyalty to the Union (7:75). When Lincoln at last asked for volunteers for three years' service, Sherman sent a gracious letter the the Secretary of War offering his sevices for the Union cause. In May 1861, he was appointed a colonel in command of the 13th Regiment of the Regular Army (18:117-118).

#### SHERMAN'S RISE TO COMMAND

Sherman was called to Washington to await the formation of his regiment. In the meantime he was called to command the Third Brigade of Volunteers, ultimately under Brigadier General Irwin McDowell. Politicians were anxious for action, and in what many have termed a premature offensive, McDowell was assigned to overthrow the enemy force at Manassas Junction, en route to the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. Sherman had just a few days to prepare raw recruits for what became the first major battle of the Civil War (4:5). McDowell Left Washington with

35,000 recruits on 16 July 1861. Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, who commanded the Confederate force at Manassas requested reinforcements. Union General Patterson, already in the field, did not move quickly enough to prevent the reinforcements from arriving. As a result, Beauregard was joined by General Joe Johnston and nearly 10 000 men for a total of 30,000 men. McDowell planned to avoid a frontal assault with raw recruits against well-positioned troops on the far side of the river (Figure 7). He therefore planned to turn the Confederates'

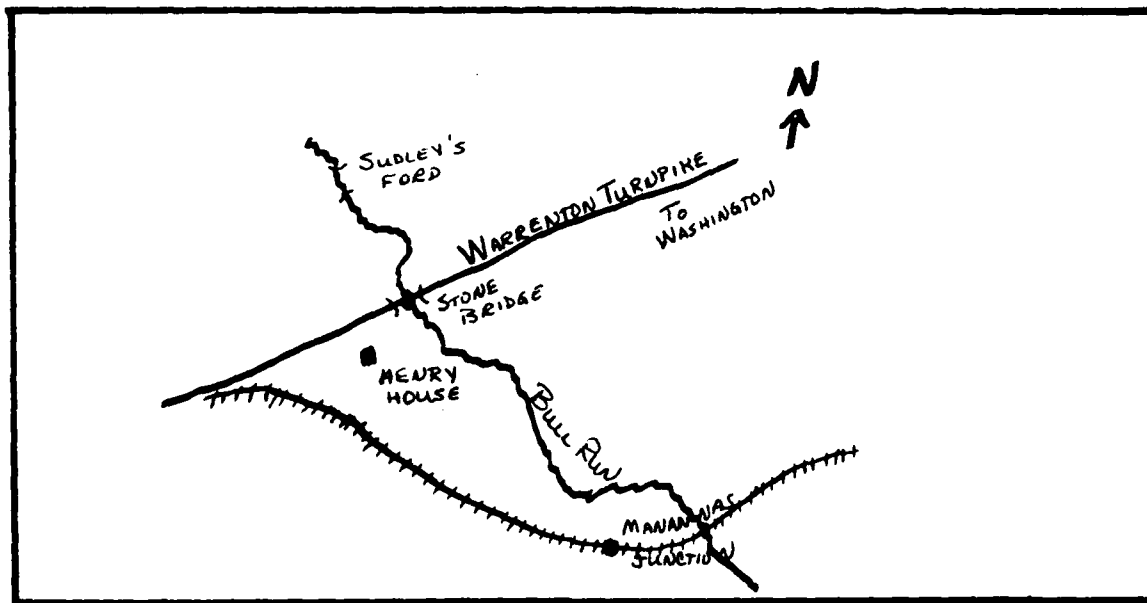


Figure 7. First Manassas (Bull Run) Battlefield

left flank. McDowell attacked at 1100, 21 July 1861. His men approached from Stone Bridge and Sudley Fords. They were met by the Confederates in both places. Beauregard and Johnston moved their men from their right across the battlefield to reinforce their left flank, and thus turned McDowell's flanking movement



into a frontal assault. After one hour of fighting, however, the Confederates fell back toward Henry House Hill and began to regroup behind Confederate general, Stonewall Jackson. Meanwhile, Sherman's men were being held in the rear unable to advance due to the bottlenecks created at the two crossing points. Sherman was nevertheless ordered to reinforce Union troops being held in check by the Confederates. His reconnaissance revealed a small, unguarded stream where he could lead his men across and join the fighting. By the time he arrived, the Confederates were beginning their withdrawal, and Sherman joined in the pursuit. Jackson's men offered a haven behind which the Confederate lines could reform. They were now at right angle to their original position (9:44). Johnston's order to counterattack was not received throughout the lines and never materialized. The Union, meanwhile, attacked again at 1330, but were faced by newly arrived Confederate reinforcements. McDowell's right and center were attacked simultaneously. With no more fresh troops, McDowell's men retreated in disorder about 1500, then broke ranks and fled in panic, leaving behind all artillery at the front line. Eventually some men dropped all belongings to include guns and cartridges and ran back to Washington. Sherman's brigade was next to the last to leave the battlefield. He had found a sheltered place for his men to regroup as regiments were driven back, and he continued to hammer at the enemy's flank. When he realized the Union forces were withdrawing, Sherman ordered his men to make an orderly retreat.

Historian Liddell Hart claimed Sherman's actions may have prevented the Union retreat from being even more disorderly than it was. Sherman also kept his men in orderly formations moving back to Washington, in the event the Confederates pursued. After four hours of combat, Sherman had sustained two wounds, and had one horse shot from under him, but he never left the front line. He emerged as the only Union hero of the First Battle of Manassas. For his actions he was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers in August 1861 (4:11). Liddell Hart's research of Confederate records led him to the conclusion that, merely Sherman's appearance with fresh troops was enough to cause the retreat to Henry House Hill, in addition to his other good choices of tactics that day (7:87-88).

Sherman was reassigned by Lincoln to Kentucky under General Robert Anderson, formerly the commander of Fort Sumter when it fell to the Confederates at the start of the Civil War, and Sherman's artillery instructor at West Point (7:93-94). Lincoln was sending Anderson to Kentucky to fortify Union supporters there and in Tennessee. Kentucky was still a neutral state, with the government leaning toward the Union while many of the citizens supported the Confederates. Anderson requested Sherman as his second in command. In September 1861 Kentucky demanded withdrawal of the Confederates and placed themselves in the Union (14:171). The situation did not resolve itself that easily, however. The Confederates had a large supply base at Columbus on the Mississippi River, and both sides realized the importance of access to the Cumberland, Ohio, and Tennessee Rivers. The

Unionists of Kentucky had no weapons or ammunition, and the Union troops were insufficient. Meanwhile the Confederates were amassing troops under General A. S. Johnston to defend the Mississippi River. Sherman requested more troops. Anderson refused to attack, believing the enemy forces to be even larger than they were. Sherman stressed to his brother that defense of the Mississippi River was more critical to the outcome of the war than defense of the capital, but the Senator's influence didn't help. Sherman received additional weapons, but no troops. Sherman asked Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to raise more volunteers. Anderson's mental and physical condition declined, and he resigned. Sherman, over all his protests, was given command of the Department of the Cumberland. He had no intelligence to feed him accurate information. Attack was out of the question, since he didn't know the condition of the enemy. Sherman was visited at this time by Secretary of War Cameron and his entourage from Washington. Cameron asked for Sherman's assessment of the situation and how many men would be required. Sherman said that he hesitated to speak in front of the group, which included a newspaper reporter. Cameron insisted. Sherman said that he needed 60,000 men to defend Kentucky and 200,000 men to control the area. Sherman was disliked by the press for imposing censorship in Kentucky. He said they leaked valuable information for the sake of a sensational story. The reporter wrote up Sherman's incredible request, somewhat embellished, along with Cameron's private comment that Sherman was "absolutely

crazy" (14:176). To make matters worse, officials from Kentucky and Tennessee pressed Washington for an offensive, saying they knew no reason why it should be postponed. The thought that Sherman was crazy for requesting so many men permeated the War Department. Sherman asked to be relieved of command. In truth, the situation was bad, but not as bad as Sherman suggested. Sherman was a victim of many circumstances which included the lack of intelligence, the large numbers of Confederate sympathizers to spy on and undermine his activities, the fact that he really was undermanned, Johnston's attempts to create the illusion of a larger force than he had, and the lack of a well-defined military strategy with regard to Kentucky plus Washington's refusal to let Sherman develop one (14:172-179). Unlike most Northerners, Sherman realized the will of the Southerners to fight was much fiercer than that of the Northerners (7:73; 18:127).

Lincoln liked Sherman and wanted to keep him in an important position, so when General Carlos Buell replaced Sherman, Sherman was sent to work for Major General Halleck in St Louis. Halleck appointed Sherman to assess the military situation throughout his Missouri command. Sherman returned to report that large numbers of additional troops were needed to control the slave state and prevent it from seceding from the Union. Other reports didn't substantiate Sherman's recommendations at the time, and Halleck was forced to relieve him. The next action was a stroke of luck for Sherman. Much has been written about Halleck's professional jealousies and stupidity, but for whatever the reason, Halleck

liked Sherman and refused to dismiss him. He gave Sherman a leave of absence to rest up from what Halleck described as a nervous breakdown. After several weeks, Halleck gave Sherman command of Benton Barracks near St Louis, where he was responsible for training 12,000 recruits. As soon as Grant captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, Halleck ordered Sherman to take command of the District of Cairo, with headquarters in Paducah. This put Sherman in charge of supplies and reinforcements to Grant and water connections to Halleck and Buell. Sherman was a superb quartermaster, and performed well in his new command. Although Sherman was senior to Grant, he offered to waive rank and serve under Grant in combat if needed. Grant was impressed with Sherman's attitude and with his logistics support. Sherman requested permission to take his division to Columbus, Kentucky and attack the Confederate supply base. He believed this was a wise move since Grant's attack on the Confederates in the area could force evacuation of Columbus. Halleck overestimated the enemy's strength and denied permission. As a result of Grant's capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, the Confederates did evacuate Columbus. When Sherman arrived, all artillery and supplies had been removed. Sherman occupied Columbus until he received orders to move to Pittsburg Landing (Figure 8) near Shiloh Church in Tennessee (7:118-119).

Grant, now a major general and in control of the Department of Tennessee, concentrated for an attack against the Confederates at Corinth, Mississippi, twenty miles south (Figure 8).

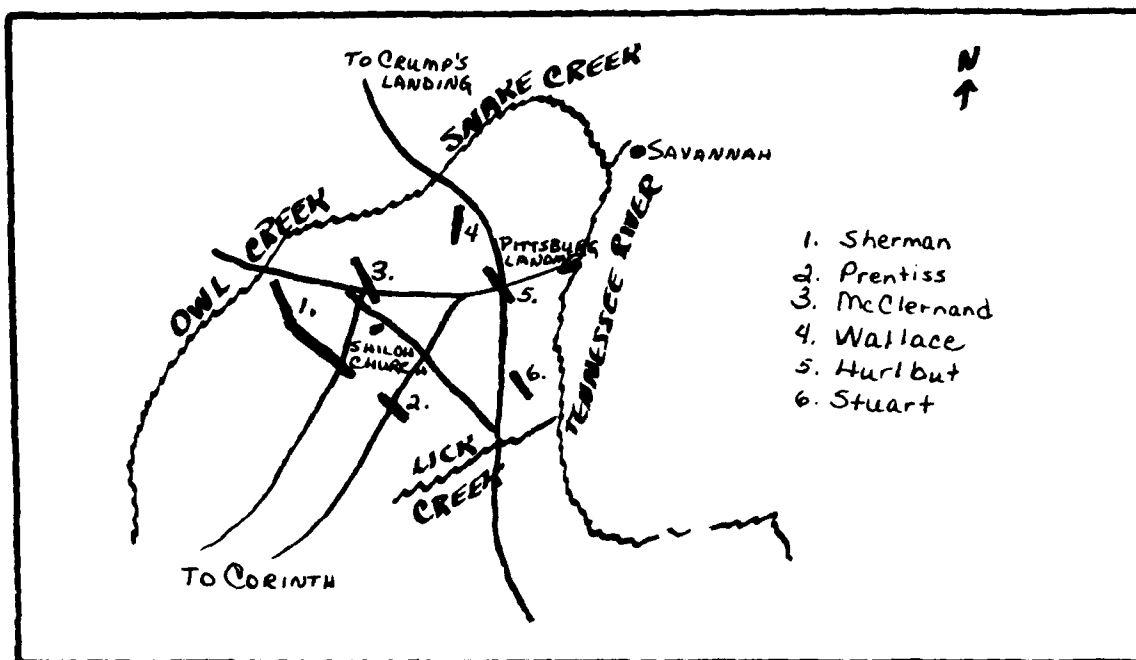


Figure 8. Shiloh Battlefield

Pittsburg Landing was chosen as a supply base by Major General Smith, Grant's predecessor. Although Sherman reported that the men should be spread along several landings in a net effect to provide security and ease of escape, Grant amassed men primarily at Pittsburg Landing (7:121). Grant was concentrating on an offensive and not on defending his position. Although he was aware of the proximity of Confederate troops, he and Sherman both disregarded the possibility of an enemy attack (7:123). The Union troops were not entrenched, they were backed up to the water, enclosed on two more sides by thick brush, and most were raw recruits. Sherman and Grant later recalled that they believed training the recruits was more important than entrenching (7:125). On Sunday, 6 April 1862, at approximately 0600, the Confederates attacked. The Union troops were not in

formation for battle. Sherman's men were in the nearest and most exposed location, near Shiloh Church, three miles west of Pittsburg Landing. There were five divisions camped on Pittsburg Landing, with a sixth at Crumps Landing, five miles away (14:196-197). At the start of the battle, General Prentiss' division was to the left of Sherman's. McClernand was behind Sherman, Hurlbut was behind Prentiss, and Wallace was at the rear behind McClernand. The Confederates attacked with three corps and a reserve division totalling just over 40,000 men. Union troops totalled almost 45,000. Many were raw recruits. The Confederates were formed into three lines of 10,000 each, preceded by skirmishers and backed up by 7,000 reserves. The lines ran from Lick Creek near the Tennessee River to Owl Creek on the Union's right. The attack came as a surprise to the Union troops, who had never been on the defensive. Sherman's words as he saw the skirmishers were, "My God! we are attacked" (5:105). Sherman and Prentiss were hardest hit in the early stages of battle. Sherman fell back to McClernand's right early in the day to avoid being flanked. Prentiss fell back soon after and fell back again between Hurlbut and Wallace. A separate brigade of Sherman's division under Colonel Stewart and located next to Lick Creek, fell back to Hurlbut's left. Sherman was wounded twice during the day and had three horses shot from under him. Another ball passed through his hat but did not injure him. Sherman never left his post, and remained in battle all day. One of his most formidable tasks was keeping his brigades in formation and

holding down desertions. By the end of the day, Sherman's camp was occupied by Confederates and Sherman's men had moved back one mile. The Confederates called off the attack at approximately 1445, shortly after General A. S. Johnston, the Confederate's commander, was killed. Sherman spent the night caring for the injured and questioning prisoners, and still was prepared for a counterattack early on April. The remaining Union forces, joined by 37,000 fresh troops under General Buell pushed the 20,000 remaining Confederates back toward Corinth. Pursuit broke off at Pea Ridge, as ordered by the overall commander, General Halleck. Grant singled out Sherman as the single commander most responsible for the Union success at Shiloh. Halleck quickly seconded the indorsement and Sherman was soon promoted to major general of volunteers.

After Shiloh, Sherman moved with his troops toward Corinth, under the personal command of General Halleck. After Corinth was occupied on 30 May, Sherman was ordered into Tennessee to repair railroads between Corinth, Grand Junction and Memphis. In July he moved into Memphis to occupy the city after it had fallen to the Union Navy. Sherman reopened businesses, churches, and schools, and reorganized city government. He provided assistance to needy citizens and permitted limited trade to promote the city's livelihood. Overall he was very successful at restoring the city to normal, although he was greatly resented by the citizens (14:205).

In December 1862 Sherman was assigned by Grant to command an expedition down the Mississippi River to assault Vicksburg,



the crucial supply and communications connection between Confederate troops east and west of the river (Figure 9).

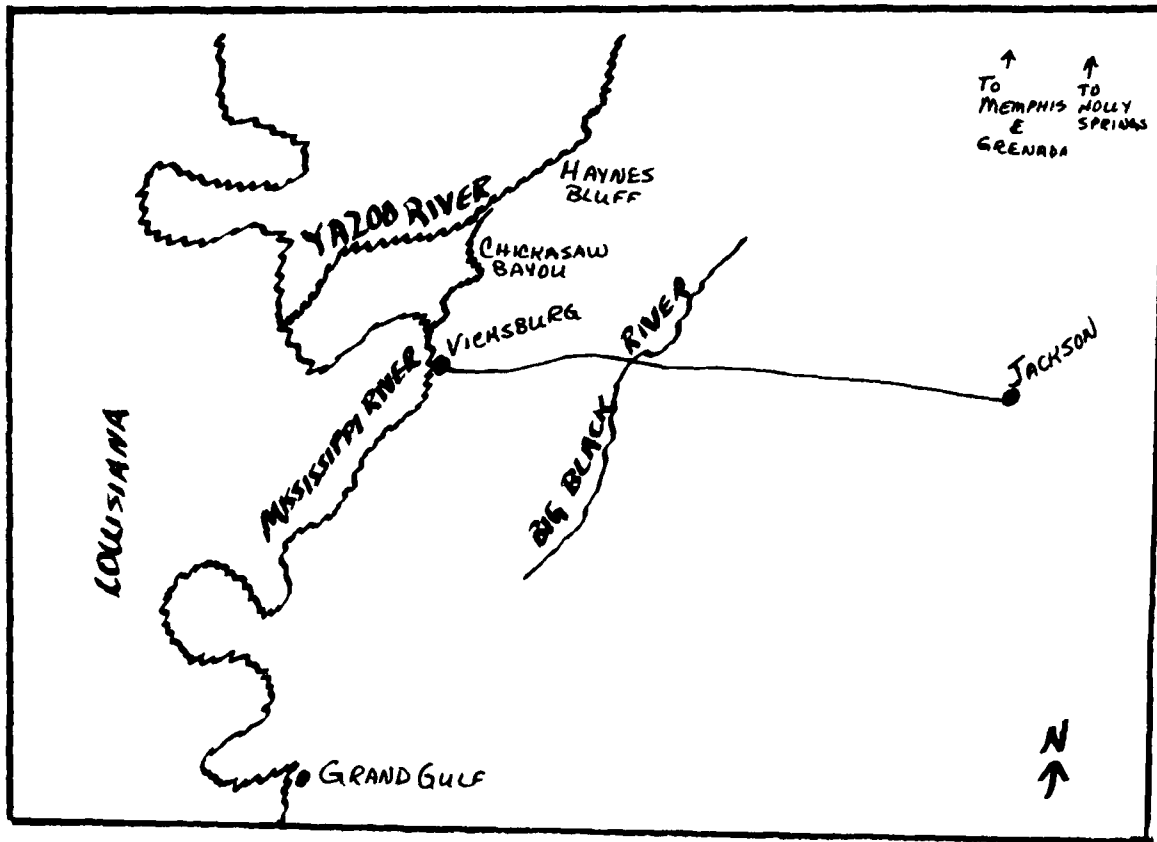


Figure 9. Vicksburg

Control of Vicksburg would allow Union troops at New Orleans to join with Grant's forces and would split the Confederacy in two. Grant's plan was for Sherman to attack Vicksburg from the rear by way of the Yazoo River which empties into the Mississippi. Grant would move simultaneously by way of Grenada, Mississippi and fend off the Confederate troops under General Pemberton. General Banks' troops from New Orleans were to join with the other Union

forces as quickly as possible. Sherman arrived at Haynes Bluff on the Yazoo on 24 December and made his way with 32,000 men to nearby Chickasaw Bayou. Meanwhile, Grant's supply line had been cut by the Confederates, forcing Grant's withdrawal. Banks was too ill to leave New Orleans and Sherman was left to carry out the attack alone. Sherman was not aware of the reason for the delay of reinforcements, but he felt it was imperative to attack, as he believed the Confederates were being reinforced daily (17:321). Pemberton strengthened his light by sending 12,000 additional men to repulse Sherman's attack. Sherman retreated after one frontal assault and one aborted attack due to inclement weather (14:213-215). The newspapers assailed Sherman once again, and Sherman forfeited his command to General McClernand, in an order dated prior to the attempt against Vicksburg. Sherman, Grant, and Halleck regarded McClernand as incompetent, but he had convinced President Lincoln to allow him to lead an independent command to capture Vicksburg. Grant, with Halleck's permission, regrouped his forces so that Sherman and McClernand each commanded a corps. He further took personal command of the Vicksburg campaign, a move he later said would not have been necessary if Sherman's command had not been upset by McClernand (14:214). Several more attempts to capture Vicksburg from the northeast and the northwest also failed. Vicksburg was difficult to approach. It sat on a high bluff overlooking the river. It was naturally fortified on two other sides and surrounded or occupied by large numbers of Confederate troops. The winter of

1862-63 was one of the worst on record. Rainfall raised the water level to the extent that dry land large enough for the Union troops to occupy was difficult to find. Sherman recommended that Grant retreat to Memphis and prepare for a new attack. Grant felt political pressure to act and feared removal if he retraced his steps, so by spring 1863 he had decided to move the Navy's ironclads and transports past Vicksburg under cover of darkness and land south of Vicksburg for an attack at the rear of the fort.

Sherman vigorously opposed Grant's plan for capturing Vicksburg. He believed the supply line would be too precarious once the men crossed the Mississippi. He wanted to repeat the first attempt by way of Grenada and the Yazoo River. Sherman believed Grant was reacting to popular criticism and was destined to fail. He feared most that Grant would then be removed from command and McClernand, whom he did not trust, would be in charge. As was characteristic of Sherman, however, he carried out his duties to the best of his abilities, and later he gave Grant all due credit for planning the advance. Sherman faked an attack at Haynes Bluff on the Yazoo while Grant's troops moved down through Louisiana toward Grand Gulf. Sherman rejoined Grant in Mississippi. Sherman led one of three corps toward Jackson, 45 miles east of Vicksburg. The Federals' advance convinced General Joe Johnston to evacuate northward. Sherman's corps stayed on in Jackson to destroy railroads, a cotton factory, arsenals, and other war-related facilities. The London Times described Sherman as "the modern Atilla" (14:223-225).

By mid May Grant's troops were situated between Pemberton's and Johnston's. Grant defeated Pemberton at Champion's Hill and Big Black River Bridge, driving Pemberton back to Vicksburg. Sherman wrote of the Vicksburg campaign that it had not been prearranged, but rather "grew out of happenings of which Grant took prompt advantage." Assistant Secretary of War Charles Dana, who was present during the Vicksburg campaign, called Sherman a brilliant man, a fine field commander, and he was impressed by Sherman's loyalty to Grant (14:226).

Sherman did not forget his former ties to the South, and he wrote his wife at this time, "Vicksburg contains many of my old pupils and friends; should they fall into our hands I will treat them with kindness" (14:226). On 4 July 1863 Pemberton surrendered. Sherman calculated the losses at 27,000 prisoners at Vicksburg, 8250 at Arkansas Post, Champion's Hill, and Jackson, plus wagons, horses, guns and ammunition. Sherman claimed that the damage done to the land would take twenty years to recover (14:227).

Grant wrote a laudatory letter to Washington complimenting Sherman's performance. As a result he was promoted to brigadier general in the regular army (14:228).

Sherman was ordered to move on to Jackson where he besieged the city. He ordered total destruction of the railroad, while foragers took all the corn, cattle, sheep, hogs, and poultry they could find. Sherman's orders prohibited looting and harm to private citizens, but he confessed in his writings that the order

was difficult to enforce. His goal was to destroy the support of Johnston's army (14:229). As the Confederates evacuated, they burned buildings and stores that could fall into Federal hands. The Federals increased the fires and destroyed the business district and many fine homes. Merrill writes that Sherman, as an individual was kind and considerate, but he believed that destroying the enemy countryside was the shortest way to win the war and would ultimately be a blessing to both sides. Sherman, however, ordered his men to distribute food and limited supplies to minimize personal suffering.

Sherman dispensed with the summer campaign due to heat and exhaustion. He spent the summer in Vicksburg, where he was joined by his family. Grant then ordered Sherman and his men to Chattanooga, where the Union soldiers were under siege. Sherman accompanied his family as far as Memphis. There his favorite son, Willy, died suddenly of typhoid. Sherman's grief was overwhelming, but he continued by special train to Chattanooga on 11 October 1863. Confederate activity en route was so heavy that railways were destroyed ahead of Sherman's men as fast as they could rebuild them. When it was obvious Sherman wouldn't complete the railways in time to help open a new supply channel, Grant ordered Sherman to Chattanooga by way of the river. Also during this time, Sherman was promoted by Grant to command the Army of the Tennessee, his favorite command during the war. He arrived at Bridgeport, Alabama, the Union supply base, on 15 November. While the two divisions with him regrouped at Bridgeport, he went to meet with Grant (7:212). Sherman was

appalled by conditions. The Army of the Cumberland was on low ground just outside the city, while Confederates controlled the surrounding high ground on Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Raccoon Mountain, plus access to the Tennessee River (Figure 10). Only one narrow route running out of the city to the north and around a mountain to Bridgeport provided any means for strategic maneuver, and it was too small (7:213). Tactical maneuver was just as improbable. Grant had developed a

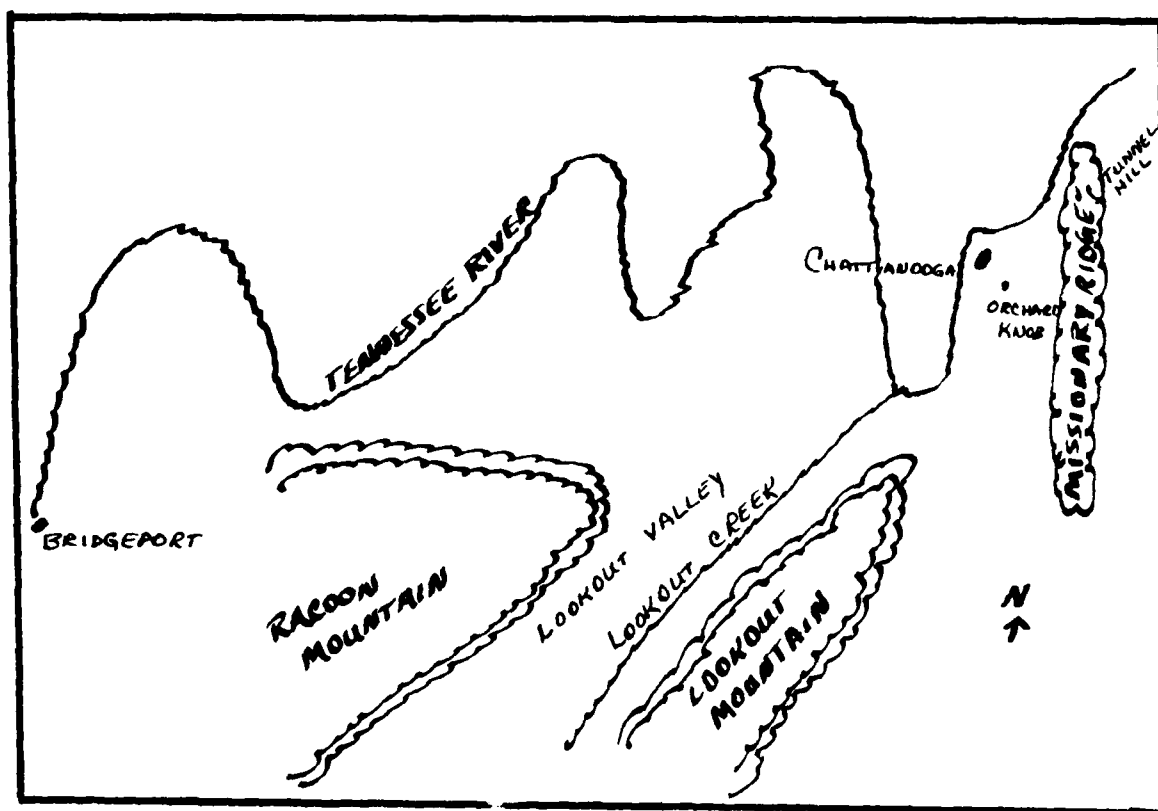


Figure 10. Chattanooga Battle Area

plan whereby Sherman would cross the Tennessee River and attack the northern end of Missionary Ridge, where the railroad crossed

at Tunnel Hill. General Joe Hooker would advance from Bridgeport and attack Lookout Mountain, General Thomas, the Rock of Chickamauga and newly appointed Commander of the Army of the Cumberland, was to strike the center. Sherman arrived on the north end of Missionary Ridge on 23 November. On the twenty-fourth he realized he was in the wrong place, on a detached hill that his reconnaissance failed to reveal. Sherman was under fire on the twenty-fourth, but at dawn on 25 November, he was ready to cross the gap and attack his objective, Tunnel Hill. The Tennessee nights were cold at that time of year, and campfires on the hillsides showed clearly the locations of both armies. At dawn, Sherman moved across the gap and captured a small knoll part way up Missionary Ridge. The Confederates had one of their ablest generals, Cleburne, opposing Sherman. Sherman requested reinforcements to match those he believed Cleburne was receiving. Sherman couldn't break through, but Grant reported later that so much of the Confederate resistance had been placed against Sherman that Thomas was successful in breaking the center of the enemy's line and forcing Bragg to retreat. Sherman was ordered immediately to Knoxville to relieve Burnside's besieged troops. Bragg's retreat convinced the Confederate general, Longstreet to do the same. Sherman returned to Chattanooga and from there took a brief leave to spend Christmas 1863 with his family in Lancaster Ohio. He discovered he was a hero, admired and revered, and hailed by the press. A joint resolution of Congress expressed thanks to Sherman and his men for relieving the Army of

the Cumberland and for gallantry at the Battle of Chattanooga (14:239).

When he returned to the Army of the Tennessee in February, 1864, he wrote a letter to his daughter, Minnie, reaffirming his affection for the people of the South, and his regret that he might be forced to fight old friends. "Of course I must fight when the time comes, but whenever a result can be accomplished without battle I prefer it" (14:240). In a second letter he wrote that "...this year [1864] will be the most important of all and I must be busy" (14:241). He commanded more than 50,000 men at this point. Sherman first went back to Vicksburg to see how successfully Union shipping was progressing down the Mississippi River. He then led an attack on Meridian, Mississippi to destroy the railroad and burn the town. His objective was to halt supplies out of Mississippi to the Confederates and make railway repair too expensive to undertake. He destroyed towns on his way back to Vicksburg. Sherman wrote that the southern people had publicly defied the Constitution, therefore, they must abide by the rules and laws of the war to which they had resorted. Sherman's destructive actions were condoned by Washington as being the proper safeguard for the Union armies in enemy territory (14:240-242).

In March, Grant was promoted to lieutenant general. He wrote a letter thanking General Sherman and General McPherson (under Sherman) as the two men "to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success" (14:243). He praised them for their thoughts and advice and for excellent execution of



orders. Grant immediately elevated Sherman, his "most trusted lieutenant" to command the Department of the Mississippi (16:157). En route to Washington, Grant traveled part way with Sherman to plan a spring offensive. There were two main objectives: Lee's army in the East and Johnston's army in the South. All Union armies would move in concert. Banks would move on Mobile from New Orleans, Butler would move on Richmond, Meade under Grant's supervision would move against Lee's army and Sherman would move against Johnston's army. The cities of Richmond and Atlanta were also prime targets. This plan would break up, destroy, or cut communications to almost all remaining Confederate forces.

Sherman recommended that his army march from Chattanooga to Atlanta. After discussing it with President Lincoln, Grant agreed. In his biography of Sherman, Merrill described Sherman's plan:

In preparing for the march to Atlanta, he [Sherman] demonstrated that he was a great engineer and a master of logistics. This campaign more than any other military operation during the war, was to underline the close relationship between war and technology (14:246).

Sherman planned to move to Atlanta by a single railroad. The railroad was extended to Reynoldsburg on the Tennessee River. Union troops could receive continuous supplies from the river, load them directly into boxcars, and move them to Sherman's men en route. Sherman estimated the weight a single locomotive could pull, then food requirements for his men and horses per day. He allowed for losses to the enemy, then calculated that he needed

120 cars a day to sustain his operation. He collected 100 locomotives and 1,000 cars. Civilians were denied transportation and roads were used to move powder and other supplies. He studied census and tax records for Georgia to determine the areas most likely to provide forage for his troops. He used the roads to back up railway deliveries. He also established railway repair crews. Eventually, he had 10,000 men trained in railway repair. After the war many of these same men would help build the Union Pacific Railroad. Tents were forbidden and rations and supplies were limited to bare necessities. Sherman's men destroyed town after town. Anything useful to the Confederate war effort was destroyed. Crops were foraged, but civilians were not to be hurt. Again he affirms his affection for the South and his regret that its people chose war above the Constitution (14:250).

Sherman fought three battles with Johnston en route to Atlanta: Resaca and New Hope Church in May and Kennesaw Mountain in June (Figure 11). Sherman's army was well fed, well trained, and well supplied. He was concerned, though, that the enlistments of his men were expiring daily. He received political pressure to furlough his men to vote in various congressional elections and to accept southern Negroes in his army. He refused on both counts, saying that his army was more important than Congress and that Negroes were not trained like his veteran army (14:252-253). In mid July Sherman got a break. Confederate President Davis relieved Johnston of his command and replaced him with General John B. Hood. Johnston and

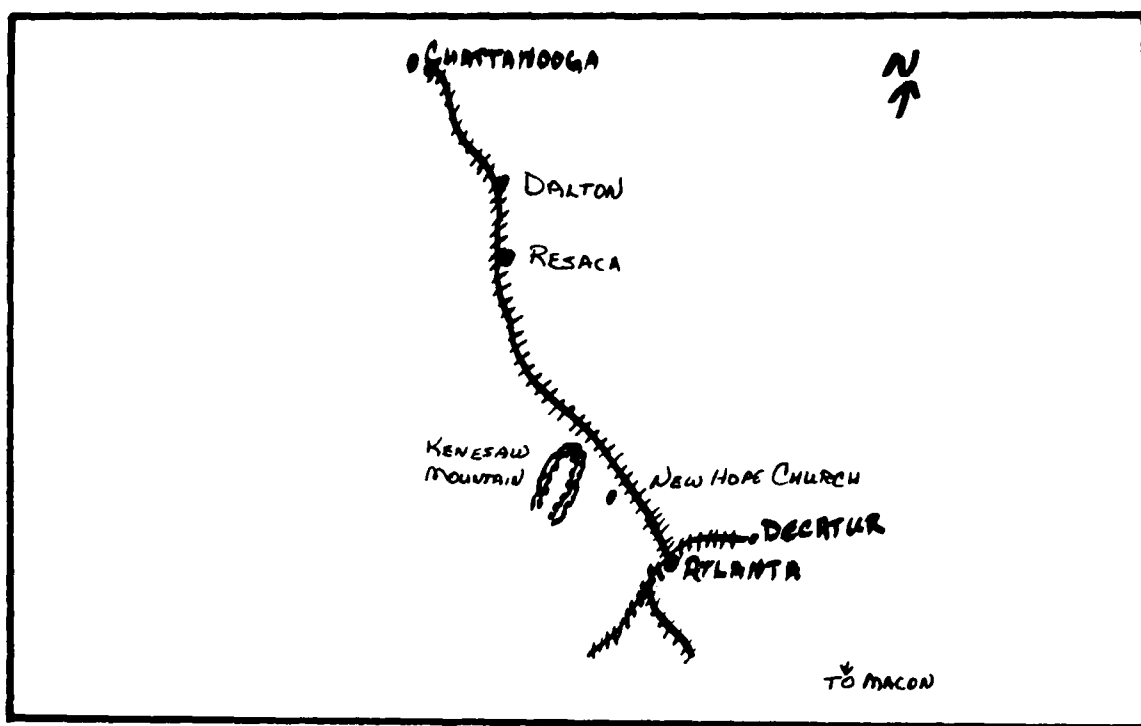


Figure 11. To Atlanta

Sherman were worthy opponents. Each preferred to succeed through maneuver, rather than through direct confrontation, but each would fight when necessary (7:429). Hood, although less experienced, was more aggressive. Hood would take the offensive. Sherman would encourage this approach and then repulse the attempt. Sherman respected Johnston's leadership very much, but he believed he could beat Hood with less trouble (14:254).

Sherman defeated Hood at the Battle of Peach Tree, 20 July and in the Battle of Atlanta on 22 July. Sherman lost his own trusted lieutenant in that battle, General James McPherson, one of the Union's ablest commanders. McPherson had advanced to command the Army of the Tennessee after Sherman advanced from

there to the Army of the Mississippi. McPherson's command rocked temporarily during a succession struggle, but Sherman's plan continued. Over several weeks, he surrounded the city and cut Confederate rail lines. Confederate morale deteriorated and desertions were high (14:255). Hood evacuated Atlanta and Sherman marched into the city on 1 September 1864. Sherman lost 30,000 men, killed, wounded, or missing, while Johnston and Hood lost almost 34,000 men. Sherman's logistics planning was brilliant--every need was met. The Nashville depot reported that 41,122 horses, 38,724 mules, 3,795 wagons, 445,355 pairs of shoes, 182,000 woolen blankets, and 107,715 water proof blankets were sent to Sherman during the march to Atlanta.

Atlanta was a great victory. The city was the junction of four railroads. It contained granaries, warehouses, and factories. By the time Sherman and his men left, the city had been burned, except for some private homes, and all citizens had been evacuated. He believed this approach would best break the enemy's will to resist and would protect his soldiers from Confederate reprisals (14:259).

The people of the North were jubilant. Lincoln was probably returned to office in November, 1864, due to the progress shown by the capture of Atlanta (7:305). Sherman was a greater hero than before. Before the presidential election, he was even approached by his brother-in-law, Tom Ewing, about running for President. Sherman strongly declined, as he would do several more times in his life (14:260;7:70). He preferred his life as a soldier, and he detested the world of politics.

Following the capture of Atlanta, Sherman made a half-hearted attempt to pursue Hood's army. Atlanta had been his real objective. Having captured it, he was prepared to make his next move. On 1 October Sherman requested of Grant permission to send General Thomas' army after Hood, whom he believed would head for Tennessee. Sherman planned to cut his own line of communication and march to either Savannah, Georgia or Charleston, North Carolina, "breaking [rail]roads and doing irreparable damage" (14:265). Grant wired approval. Sherman burned Atlanta on 14 November and began his March to the Sea on 16 November. Sherman wrote to General Halleck, now chief of staff under Grant, that he must have alternative routes of march, so that the enemy could not oppose his march along a single route. "...having alternatives, I can take so eccentric a course that no general can guess my objective" (14:266). His march would serve two purposes: to demonstrate the vulnerability of the South, and that both hostile people and hostile armies must feel the hard hand of war (14:266).

His first target could have been Macon or Augusta, then Augusta or Savannah (8:152). Liddell Hart wrote that Sherman's march was unchecked for 425 miles because of the moral and physical effect of his flexible, deceptive strategy. He divided his troops into five or six columns, each flanked by foragers. Each corps was self contained. There was no single supply line. If one column was detained, the others could move on. He threw off more equipment and marched lighter than before. Even

Sherman's 60,000 men were never sure of their ultimate target. The enemy divided forces to protect both Macon and Augusta (Figure 12). They believed they couldn't afford to lose either

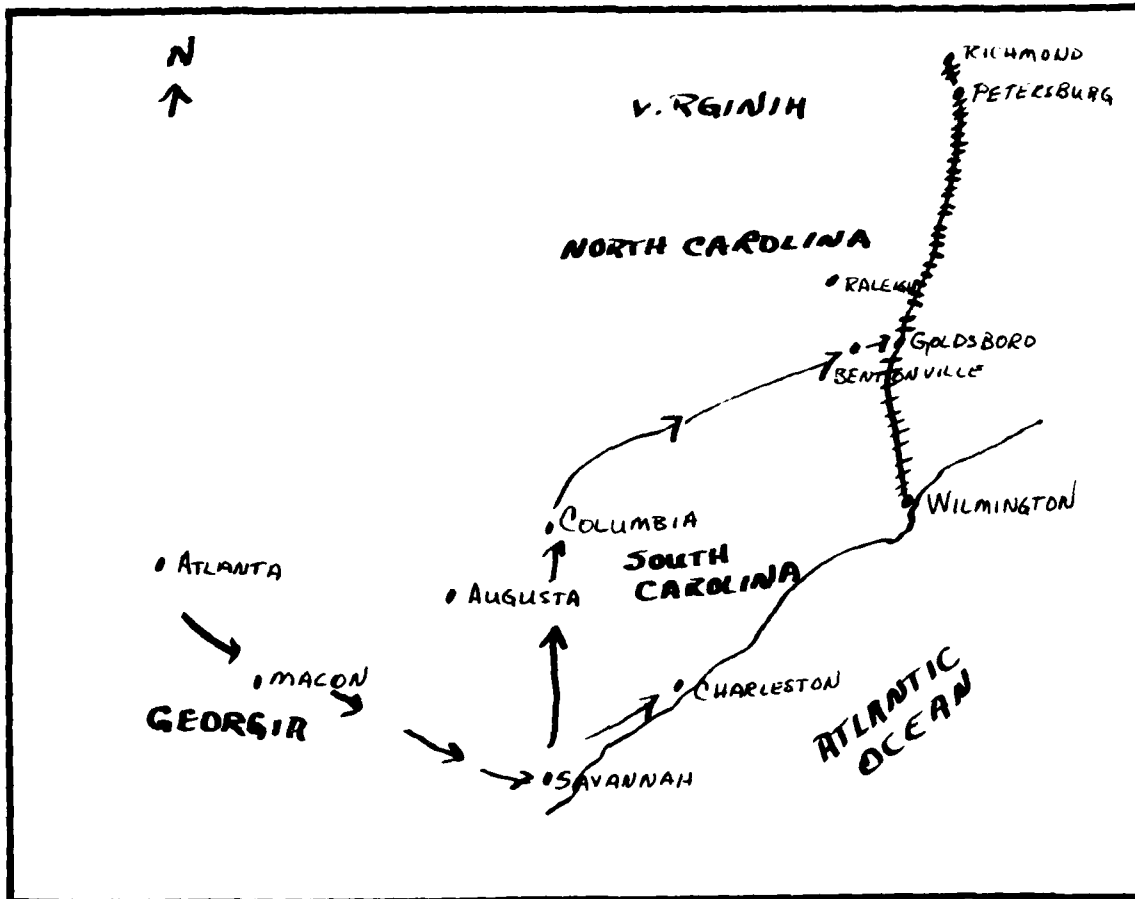


Figure 12. March to the Sea/ March through the Carolinas

city and couldn't determine Sherman's target. By the time it became obvious that Savannah was the target, the Confederates could not regroup in time. By mid December, Sherman reached Savannah. The city surrendered and swore allegiance to the Union. On Christmas Day Sherman wired Lincoln, presenting him with the captured southern city. At this time Sherman received

word that he had lost a second son, an infant named Charlie whom he had never seen. This period renewed his grief for his older son, Willy, but he continued his campaign without interruption.

Sherman was again challenged, this time by Secretary of War Stanton, regarding his refusal to use Negro recruits. Sherman maintained that the jump from slavery to responsibility was too big to bridge in one step. He could not turn slaves into good soldiers so quickly. And even if he did, having helped to win the war, the Negroes could rightfully expect to take a higher place in society than they could deal with, or than the government was prepared for. He suggested allowing the Negroes to develop societies away from exploitive techniques of white men, and join the white society when equipped to do so. He refused to budge on this issue and there is no indication he was confronted with it again. To the contrary, Stanton approved of Sherman's ideas (14:278).

Sherman prepared to march through the Carolinas (Figure 12). South Carolina, in particular, was to be punished for attacking Fort Sumter and starting the war. Meanwhile Thomas defeated Hood near Nashville, and General Joe Johnston was returned to his command.

Everything along Sherman's way was burned or foraged, but he ordered the Union soldiers to continue passing out food to keep Carolinians from starving. As Union troops neared Columbia, capital of South Carolina, residents moved and riots broke out. Confederates soldiers were caught looting, along with private

citizens. The panic was so great that the Union soldiers helped to evacuate women and old people, while fighting a large fire of unknown origin. Sherman burned the city, destroyed railroads, and confiscated private property. He ordered his staff to help relocate homeless citizens from the first night's fire. On 21 February 1865, four days after arriving, Sherman moved on. His contradictory actions of destroying cities while providing some emergency aid to their citizens emphasized his philosophy that prevailed from the early days of the war--the citizens should feel deprived and desperate as a result of their war, and they should live to tell everyone they knew that war was so terrible, that it should not be resorted to again (14:284). Sherman took Charleston without a battle. Railroads were cut and rebels were forced to evacuate the city for lack of food.

Destruction subsided in North Carolina. That state had been more reluctant to leave the Union and the soldiers' resentment toward South Carolina did not carry over. General Johnston caught up with Sherman at Bentonville, near Goldsboro in March. The Union soldiers held off the Confederates and proceeded to Goldsboro to join up with additional forces. It has been written that Sherman's march did not immediately affect Lee's decision to surrender, but Lee suffered a great number of desertions, as men returned south to protect family and property (2:199).

In late March, Sherman left his army to join Grant, Lincoln and Admiral Porter for a strategy session. Sherman was ordered to join Grant's forces to jointly capture Richmond and end the war. On 2 April 1865, however, Grant captured Petersburg and



Richmond after a nine-month siege. On 9 April 1865 Lee surrendered. Sherman marched from Goldsboro to Raleigh to confront Johnston. After evacuating Raleigh, Johnston wrote Sherman asking for peace terms. Lincoln was assassinated as Sherman started for the conference. Sherman offered fair peace terms, based on a conversation with Lincoln during the recent strategy session. Sherman envisioned no reconstruction, but rather that the states would take their rightful place in the Union as soon as they swore allegiance to the Constitution and participated in the functions of national government. Johnston was empowered through the Confederate Secretary of War to speak for all remaining Confederate armies and was willing to accept the terms. The new administration under Andrew Johnson would not uphold such an agreement, reacting to public pressure to punish the South. Once again the press assailed Sherman for his inappropriate actions. Grant refused to let his old friend and trustworthy subordinate be a target for the press and government and shielded him from the reactions. At Grant's direction Sherman negotiated new peace terms similar to those offered to Lee. Johnston accepted the terms on 27 April 1865 and surrendered his men.

#### SUMMARY

Sherman's strategy, based on a total war concept, and his understanding of southern people and southern territory was the perfect complement to Grant's strategy of attrition used in the last campaigns. Sherman's venture into the grand strategy arena

by dictating his initial mild peace terms could have spared the Union a bitter period of reconstruction which was much worse than Sherman's destructive march. Nevertheless, Sherman was a hero to his men and to his country. He remained Grant's lifelong friend, cautioning him against politics and avoiding politics himself. Several times he could have been promoted or appointed over Grant, both during and after the war, but each time he refused. In 1866 Sherman was elevated to lieutenant general, second in command to Grant, who was promoted to general. When Grant became president, Sherman became commander of the U.S. Army and was promoted to general. He remained in that position until mandatory retirement at age 64. Sherman stayed close to Grant through Grant's final illness. He outlived his wife and many of his war time comrades. When he died in 1891, his worthy adversary and post-war friend General Joe Johnston attended the funeral, leading to his own death of pneumonia five weeks later. President Harrison, who served in the Atlanta campaign, called him "an ideal soldier...[who] was a soldier only that these [civil institutions under the Constitution] might be perpetuated...." (14:410). Sherman's view of strategy changed very little during the Civil War. His increased confidence, elevation to more responsible positions and support of a trusting leader allowed him to execute the strategy necessary to defeat the enemy armies and the will of the southern people.

KEY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF  
WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN

- 8 Feb 1820 Birth of Tecumseh Sherman, sixth of eleven children, to Judge Charles Robert and Mary Hoyt Sherman, Lancaster, Ohio.
- Jun 1829 Death of Judge Robert Sherman and subsequent adoption of Tecumseh by the Thomas Ewing family, Lancaster, Ohio.
- 1836-1840 Sherman attended West Point Military Academy. Graduated sixth of forty-three and commissioned to artillery.
- 1 May 1850 Married Eleanor Ewing, daughter of his benefactor.
- 6 Sep 1853 Sherman resigned from U.S. Army.
- Dec 1860 South Carolina seceded from Union.
- 12 Apr 1861 Union surrenders Fort Sumter to the Confederacy. (Beginning of American Civil War.)
- May 1861 Appointed colonel of the 13th United States Infantry (regular army).
- Aug 1861 Promoted to brigadier general after Battle of Bull Run (Manassas).
- 8 Oct 1861 Assumes command of the Department of the Cumberland. Sherman plans to resign after bad press releases, but given a leave of absence by General Halleck.
- Apr 1862 Promoted to major general after Shiloh.
- 4 Jul 1863 Grant captures Vicksburg with Sherman in key position.
- Mar 1864 Sherman takes command in the West when Grant gets promoted.
- Sep 1864 Sherman captures Atlanta.
- 9 Apr 1865 General Lee surrenders to General Grant at Appomattox Court House.
- 26 Apr 1865 General J.E. Johnston surrenders to General Sherman.

1866	Promoted to lieutenant general
Feb 1868	Promoted to brevet general
4 Mar 1869	Succeeded to General of the Army when General Grant was elected President.
14 Feb 1891	Death of William T. Sherman of pneumonia.

## Chapter Four

### COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES

This chapter will compare and contrast the strategy and influences on strategy of General Ulysses S. Grant and General William T. Sherman.

Grant and Sherman were, individually, unlikely candidates to become successful Civil War military leaders. Together, they were even more unlikely to become what Admiral Porter called "a very perfect officer, [who] ought never be separated" (14:231). Yet the combined strategies of Grant and Sherman brought the war to a conclusion, returned Lincoln and the Republicans to office, and restored the Union.

Before comparing strategies, it may be helpful to summarize similar influences on their lives prior to the Civil War. Both men grew up in Ohio, they knew the Western country reasonably well, and both were experienced horsemen. Both men were educated at West Point with Sherman being more scholarly. Both men left the Army after more than ten years of service, bored and disillusioned. Before leaving the Army, however, each obtained valuable experience as a quartermaster which allowed them the distinct advantage of better understanding the impact of supply and logistics on strategy formulation. Neither man found a

successful civilian career. Sherman tried banking, law and railroad management. He was pleased with his duties as a military school superintendent, but that career was cut short by the war. Grant's attempts at farming, real estate and tanning were dismal. But there were differences that had a significant impact on their approaches.

At the start of the war, Grant, unlike Sherman, had great difficulty finding his way back into the Army. He had no political connections and few army friends from whom he could solicit favors. He finally accepted a position in charge of volunteers, rather than the preferred commission in the regular army. Sherman, conversely, had excellent political connections--his benefactor, Senator Thomas Ewing, and his brother, Senator John Sherman. President Lincoln knew and liked him. Several positions were offered to him, including Assistant Secretary of War. Sherman rejected these opportunities. He believed the war would be longer than the politicians realized, and he hesitated to enter too soon (7:74). He believed the government's approach of preparing for a short war would fail and the early military leaders would be cast aside as a result (7:71). Until Congress established clear national objectives and a proper force and strategy were applied, he could not have confidence in the government's approach (7:72). Grant on the other hand believed the war would be of short duration, that "the Rebellion against the government would collapse suddenly and soon" (6:Vol I, 368). Consequently, he wanted into the war as quickly as possible.

Both generals entered the war as amateur combat commanders,

as was true of many of the senior Union officers. Particularly in Grant's case, his strategy evolved as the war developed. He learned by doing, and he recognized his mistakes in time to profit from them.

At the beginning of the war, Grant was an aggressive soldier anxious to fight. He realized what was strategically important in his surroundings, e.g. seizing Paducah to gain control of Kentucky for the Union, and moving quickly on Forts Henry and Donelson to deny the enemy control of the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. Grant had a lot to learn about the principles of war, security at Belmont, for example, but he learned from his mistakes. Grant's approach was always simple, direct and logical. His advance to Vicksburg from the south might have seemed to be a contradiction, but the fact that he felt the pressure of political criticism and a rival for his command influenced his decision to pursue a strategy over the objections of his closest subordinates, especially Sherman. Grant's strategy for fighting the war evolved and enlarged with each battle, and his battles show steady progression in size and scope from 3000 men and a rescue mission at Belmont to control of all the Union armies. His strategy for the last year of the war reflects the first genuine effort to use the Union forces in concert to achieve the objective--to defeat the Confederate armies, their resources and will to make war, and ultimately to restore the Union. Due to his extensive experience in the West, he understood better than his predecessors, except for Halleck,

the significance of the western campaigns to the outcome of the war, and the impact their results could have on the campaign in the East. He successfully linked the two for the first time. Theoretically, Halleck, with his similar experience in the West and scholarly understanding of military history, doctrine, and strategy should have been able to do this. His overcautiousness, professional jealousies and too strict adherence to textbook solutions prevented him from succeeding. When Grant assumed command, he had no political axes to grind, and he believed in putting the best men in the critical jobs. For example, he could have ousted Halleck, but chose to use his administrative and political savy to its best advantage. This left Grant free to return to the field, where he was most effective, and where he could avoid the political micromanagement that had plagued the Army of the Potomac more than bad leadership. It has been said that Grant's mind was a mind of synthesis, slow to process information, but finally arriving with the best idea from all available inputs. Having made a decision, he was willing to act on it--promptly. He was known to change his approach (e.g. Vicksburg), but he never gave up an idea once he made a decision (e.g. repeated attempts to move on Mobile). It is difficult to say how well-versed Grant was in military doctrine. Having attended West Point during the time of Dennis Hart Mahan, he must have been exposed to Napoleon, Jomini etc., as taught by Mahan. Given Grant's indifference toward much of the curriculum, he may have retained little. His best lessons were probably learned first hand under Winfield Scott during the Mexican War. Cutting



his own communications and supplies at Vicksburg was reminiscent of Scott's march from Vera Cruz to Mexico City after cutting his supply line with the Navy. Grant's opinion of military history and doctrine are quoted by his biographer, McCartney, as follows:

...I don't underrate the value of military knowledge, but if men make war in slavish observance of rules they will fail...Even Napoleon showed that; for my impression is that his first success came because he made war in his own way, and not in imitation of others." (12:283)

Sherman entered the war with no combat experience, but with extensive thoughts on strategy. His opinion of the length and intensity of the war, based on years of living in the South left him with a sense of foreboding regarding the North's short-sighted approach. Although Sherman was a good strategist and tactician and had a good grasp of grand strategy, his apprehension in the beginning threatened to ruin his career early in the war. Before the accuracy of his predictions were realized, many of his statements made early in the war seemed outlandish. It is interesting to note that eventually the Union sent almost 200,000 men to control the Mississippi Valley area (14:189). Two years earlier, when Sherman gave that estimate to Secretary of War Cameron, he was called "absolutely crazy." Sherman was intelligent and resourceful. He demonstrated this at Manassas when he was the only Union commander on the field who could find an unguarded ford to cross Bull Run and aid his contemporaries who were being outflanked by the Confederates. Sherman's over estimate of the enemy capability in Kentucky, on which were built the rumors of his insanity, rather accurately portrayed the lack

of control, organization, and sufficient support by the government. Sherman was credited with saving Shiloh. His tactics were superb under the circumstances, he showed great courage by staying at the front while wounded, and his actions were efficient and prompt. If Grant had spread out his men onto several different landings, protected by Navy gunboats, as Sherman recommended before the battle, the Union could have created a net-like effect from which to advance, fight, or safely retreat (7:121). Sherman's knowledge of doctrine was also probably gained at West Point. At the beginning of the Civil War, Sherman avidly studied and reread available strategy and doctrine books, as well as Army drill tactics (7:93). He believed this was the beginning of order, discipline and successful leadership. Liddell Hart described Sherman as a master of indirect warfare, never fighting when he could outmaneuver the enemy, and striking at the enemy's communications while protecting his own (8:148,150). He demonstrated this admirably during his advance on Atlanta and his "March to the Sea". His use of psychological warfare to demoralize the southern citizens at the rear of the Confederate Army took a toll on the soldiers who were helpless to protect their families and property. Sherman's perfected arts of railway destruction, confiscation of war-related resources, and foraging from the enemy's land helped to choke off supplies to the Army of Virginia. The move would have had a more material effect on the war if Lee had waited longer to surrender. Sherman also proved he could move through the enemy's territory at will, further

unbalancing the Confederates.

Sherman really did not change his approach to strategy during the war. His beliefs and resulting actions did not vary. But he increased his confidence to act and was elevated to higher positions from which to carry out his strategy. For his purposes, he perfected logistics support, maneuver, surprise, and he brought the results to the door step of the civilians who supported the war effort.

The combination of Grant and Sherman was a most fortunate coincidence for the Union. Each respected and complemented the strengths of the other. Their professional relationship and lifelong friendship which began at Shiloh, resulted in a mutual trust and admiration that never waivered. Grant relied on Sherman's promptness and efficiency. At Corinth, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Atlanta--Grant called upon Sherman to perform the most difficult or critical tasks (for example, the first attack on Vicksburg at Chickasaw Bayou). Grant, in turn provided the direction, authority, determination, and common sense that Sherman knew was necessary for the Union to win the war. Grant never hesitated to assume command, and Sherman never was apprehensive about assuming command under Grant. Both were honest men of great integrity. They were intent on the outcome of the war and neither used his situation for political gains or favors. After the war, Grant was coaxed into politics, but Sherman avoided involvement at all costs and advised Grant to do the same. They believed that the military was an instrument of

policy-making and not a personal springboard. Military and politics should be kept separate by the military professional. Many of their politically-appointed contemporaries made this mistake, and many, like McClernand, disappeared during the course of the war.

Each man waged a battle of sorts with the press. Grant's rumored drinking problem and defeat at Shiloh are examples of situations that gave the press grounds for sensationalized stories. Grant courted the war correspondents to some degree after that, although he doesn't seem to have changed his actions at any time because of them. Conversely, Sherman never gave up his battle to run the newspaper correspondents out of the combat areas. He believed they were no better than spies, as they gave away valuable information to the enemy for the sake of a good story. He rebuked their failure to make a unified effort to protect the Union in this respect, and threatened to shoot those who irritated him most. Bad press plagued Sherman at instances throughout the war. However, he felt his criticism was justified. Sherman, in a letter to his brother, John, blamed the press for leaking intelligence information before the battles of First Manassas and Vicksburg, among other instances, which contributed to Union defeats or rebuffs (18:191).

In a final comparison, Grant did not shrink from direct confrontation, as shown in his final campaign against Lee in the East. He also saw the value of Sherman's indirect approach and applied it well at the rear of the Confederate army in late 1864-65. Each appreciated the importance of logistics to an operation

and each continually improved his ability to move as self-contained as possible and with less, or no dependence on, vulnerable supply or communications lines.

Grant and Sherman understood the relationship between national objectives, grand strategy, and military strategy and tactics. They understood that the military was a tool to achieve broader objectives, and not an end in itself. Although each realized these relationships at the beginning of the war, they improved upon their talents during four years of war. By the end of the war, they understood basic principles of war and how to adapt them to greatest advantage against the armies, resources, and wills of the enemy. Their professional relationship was one of the most successful in American military history, and to study these two great warriors will enhance one's understanding of the ACSC strategy process model.

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